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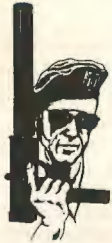
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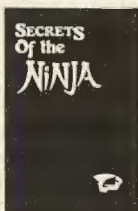
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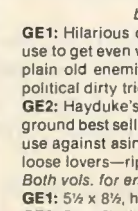
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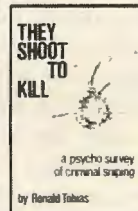
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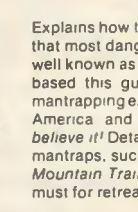
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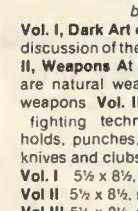
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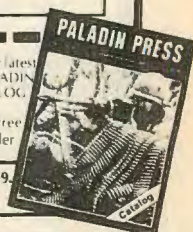
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OPEN LETTER TO PRESIDENT REAGAN:

DEAR Mr. President:

I truly hope you read this, because it will be a rare opportunity to read the truth about the situation in El Salvador. You can't read it in the *Washington Post* or *New York Times* because they are in the corner of the communist guerrillas who are seeking to overthrow the moderate government of President Jose Napoleon Duarte, along with the other civilian and military members of the junta now guiding El Salvador's destiny.

The liberal Eastern Seaboard press, Mr. President, will not print the other truly accurate reports coming from El Salvador, which are from UPI's John Newhagen and *Newsweek*/UPI freelancer John Hoagland.

El Salvador needs help, both military and economic, in order to shore up its war-shattered economy. The military help, Mr. President, about which I know much more than I do about the civilian economy, can largely be furnished without costing the American taxpayers a single dollar.

The Eastern press is fond of comparing El Salvador to Vietnam. I spent more than two years in the latter country, and there are some comparisons, but El Salvador is no Vietnam and need not be. The similarities are these:

Both countrysides contain lush tropical vegetation. Both countries are or have been the targets of communist insurgencies inspired from outside: Vietnam from North Vietnam, and El Salvador from Fidel Castro's Cuba and Nicaragua. But that is where the comparison ends.

The Vietnamese army was well-trained and equipped — although the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese were better so, courtesy of Red China and the Soviet Union. The El Salvadoran soldiers get about six weeks of military training and then, unless they are lucky, are sent straight into battle with worn-out rifles and very little else.

A large section of the Vietnamese army simply lacked the will or the inspiration to fight. In a large portion of Vietnam, the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese were popular with the populace. Neither case is so in El Salvador. The Salvadoran soldiers are among the bravest and most dedicated I have ever seen. Most of the *campesinos*, the people in the countryside, oppose the guerrillas in El Salvador and, although they seek nothing more than peace, they are willing to risk their lives to serve as guides to the army. This is not a revolution that enjoys popular support, as was Nicaragua. And now the Nicaraguans are regretting their consignment to the tender mercies of communism as directed by Castro.

But, brave as it is, the Salvadoran army needs help — and it does not want U.S. troops as did the Vietnamese. It wants to go it alone, and here is how we can help at very little cost:

The Salvadoran army needs modern weapons. It needs boots. It needs medicine. It needs tropical uniforms. It needs steel helmets. Hell, it needs practically everything.

AND we have stockpiles of all this material, left over from Vietnam days, sitting around in warehouses, unused, possibly forgotten.

The Salvadoran army is equipped with worn-out H&K G-3 rifles — a large, cumbersome assault rifle. The Salvadoran soldiers are small, although hardy, people. Their G-3s practically drag on the ground. Send them M16s, or those thousands of AK-47s we captured in 'Nam.

I was shocked when, with A Co., First Bn., Fifth Brigade, cut-off, outnumbered and surrounded, I saw that its only automatic weapon was a Danish Madsen light machine gun. That weapon, Mr. President, is as much a museum piece as is the Springfield musket. The guerrillas do not use worn-out weapons. They've got FN-FALs and M16s, courtesy of Russia and Vietnam. They've got RPG-2 and 7 rockets. They've got RPD light machine guns.

The heaviest weapon with which A Company was armed was an M79 grenade launcher. Men have to be very brave indeed to fight with the weapons I've mentioned.

The El Salvadoran army has only 10 helicopters for use as medevac or

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COVER: Civilian guide to El Salvadoran army crouches behind stone wall during fire fight in Amitlan Abajo, village only recently wrested from guerrilla force. He carries captured Mauser Mod. 98. Guerrillas fought hard for ville because it was a complex of battalion HQ, field hospital with more than a ton of medical supplies and munitions factory. Photo: John Hoagland, Gamma/Liaison.

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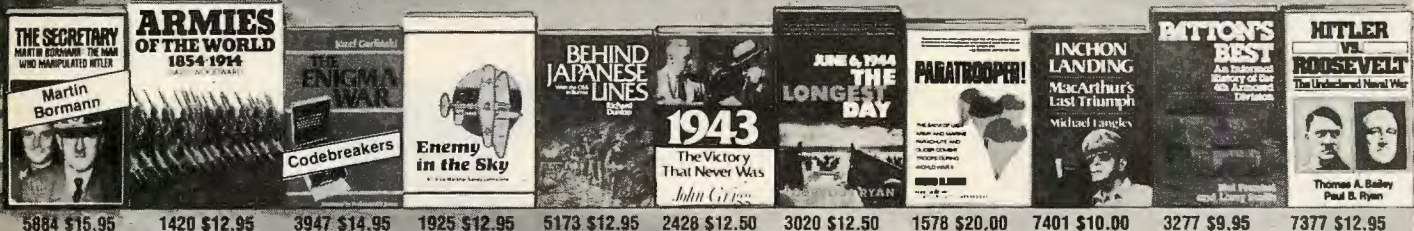
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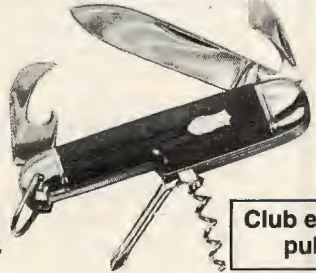
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12-M168

BULLETIN BOARD

by Bob Poos



NRA CREDITS SOF . . .

The National Rifle Assn. has given SOF and its Editor/Publisher Robert K. Brown full credit for bringing to the United States the "first testable quantities" of Russia's new AK-74 ammunition.

A story beginning on p. 36 of the July 1981 *American Rifleman*, the NRA's official journal, says:

"Headstamp dates of Russian AK-74 ammunition brought back from Afghanistan and observed by the Technical Staff placed the onset of production as early as 1974. But U.S. Government agencies, queried about such a rifle, did not confirm its existence until the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan prompted journalist Galen Geer, on assignment for *Soldier of*

Fortune magazine, to enter Afghanistan and return with the first testable quantity of 5.45mm Soviet ammunition. The ammunition was subsequently offered to government agencies and the NRA for testing and evaluation.

"Geer, along with his publisher, Lt. Col. Robert K. Brown, visited NRA

Headquarters in the spring of 1980 with the first known samples of Russian 5.45 ammunition obtained in Afghanistan. . . .

"After Geer's trip, Brown went to Afghanistan and returned with several thousand rounds of 5.45mm ammunition, which he gave to the U.S. Army."

SUPPORT FREEDOM . . .

SOF again urges readers to write their Congressmen, Senators and the President to support the Afghan Freedom Fighters in their struggle against Soviet oppression.

We'd also like to remind readers of the Nicaraguan Exile Relief Fund. If readers wish to contribute to either worthwhile cause, simply write SOF, P.O. Box 693, Boulder, CO 80306, and designate the group targeted for assistance.



EXCLUSIVE: A source at Fabrique Nationale Herstal informs SOF that its new FNC assault rifle (above), which is built on the basic FN action but fires a .223 cartridge, has been in action — successfully — for the first time. Late last March, five guerrillas hijacked an Indonesian Garuda airliner and forced it to go first to Penang, Malaysia, and subsequently to Bangkok. The hijackers demanded the release of 89 political prisoners and payment of \$1.5 million for safe return of the plane. Indonesian officials bought time by telling the guerrillas that a special government meeting had been called to discuss the matter.

FN-Herstal shortly before had delivered to Indonesia the FNCs it had bought. Indonesia's elite Red Beret Corps was undertaking extensive training with the weapon at the time, and 20 men, led by Lt. Col. Sintong Panjaitan, were ordered to storm the plane, with Thailand's concurrence. The result: three dead guerrillas — and no injuries to passengers. Troops credited their success largely to the FNC with its folding stock and three-round-burst capability.

For further information on the weapon write Steyr Daimler, Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 2369, Secaucus, NJ 07094.

Continued on page 69

GIVE YOUR GUN THE NITEX TO MATCH ITS

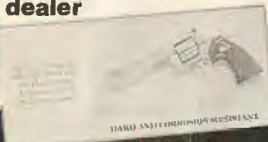
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Your exciting trip through the world of silver miniature arms collecting and military history begins with "The Famous Knives of World War II," the most comprehensive collection of military knives ever issued.

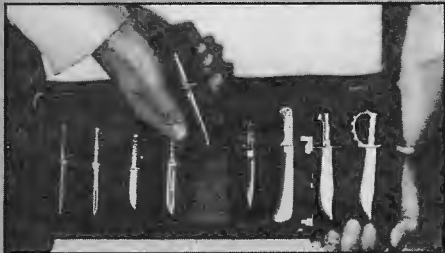
The first knife—which you may now reserve—is the Fairbairn-Sykes Fighting Knife, made famous by Colonel Darby's U.S. Army Rangers, Commando-trained U.S. Marine Raiders, Merrill's Marauders, the British Commandos, the Chindits and the Special Air Service. The original knife was 12" overall, but your silver miniature, created in fascinating one-third scale, will measure only 4."

The top nut, the grip, the crossguard—and, yes, even the blade—will be crafted entirely in solid Sterling Silver. And the word "Sterling" will be struck in tiny letters, with the Foundation's silver hallmark, on the blade reverse. When you heft the knife, despite its small size, you will be impressed with its weight of more than 13 grams.

Nine different knives have been selected by The American Historical Foundation for this unprecedented series. And each will be made available to you on a convenient systematic basis so you can enjoy building a complete collection, if you wish. There is no minimum purchase requirement. And each will be created in solid Sterling Silver, in one-third miniature scale.

Knives of Fighting Men

The knives will pay tribute to the men of the United States Armed Forces in World War II—the Army, Navy, Army Air Corps and Marine Corps. These knives saw action in the hands of fighting men in the dense jungles of the Pacific. Over the blazing sands of North Africa. Through the snow and mud of Northwestern Europe. And across the rugged mountains of the China-Burma-India Theatre.

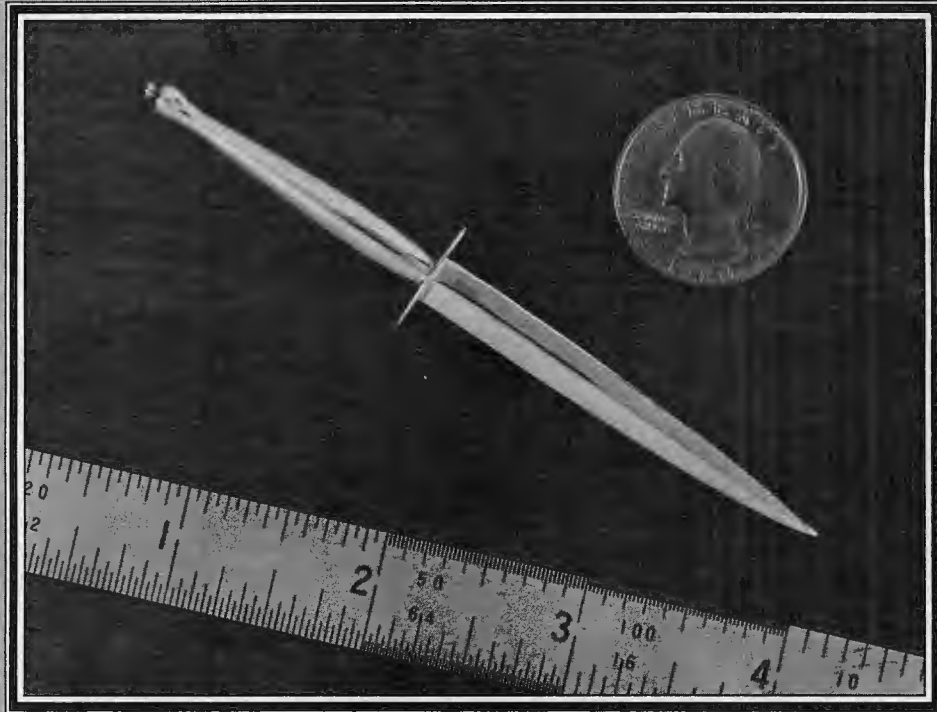


Your collection will include the famous "Ka-Bar" Fighting/Utility Knife carried by the first-wave assault Marines, and the M3 Trench Knife of the front-line soldiers of the U.S. Army. You will also receive rare and particularly interesting knives, such as the massive "Gung Ho" jungle knife which became the symbol of Carlson's Marine Raiders, and the delicate, but effective, V-42 Stiletto of the First Special Service Force.

To acquire the original full size knives you would spend over fifteen hundred dollars—and it would be rather difficult at that to find them all. But now, through this miniature collection you can enjoy the convenience and satisfaction of acquiring perfect specimens at a far more reasonable price, and in Sterling Silver, at that.

Irrepressible Fascination of Miniatures

The small size creates an irrepressible fascination which is not often found even in the full-size objects: After all, it is no longer unusual to see fine collections of full-size antique arms. But only a few people have ever been able to see, handle and study miniature arms. And, prior to this, solid Sterling Silver miniatures in a limited edition collector series were simply not available at any price. So



Solid Sterling Silver limited edition World War II Fairbairn-Sykes Fighting Knife. Actual Size. \$39 ppd.

this is indeed a rare opportunity.

As you may have seen elsewhere, many miniature objects lose their scale and take on a "clumsy" look. Not so with these. Each is fashioned from a true-scale master, painstakingly created by a skilled *knifemaker*—a man who knows the lines, the proportions and the proper "feel" of knives but also has the steady hands and patience of an expert silversmith. He works directly from original knives from the Foundation's wartime collection to further assure that your knives will be accurate and authentic when you admire them from all sides and angles.

The one-third scale was carefully selected as being sufficiently smaller than the originals to make them interesting, but large enough so you don't need tweezers and a magnifying glass to enjoy them.

If these knives were made full size in solid silver the cost would be prohibitive. But, because they are only one-third size, the modest original issue prices bring these knives well within the range of every collector.

Enjoyable Way to Build Your Collection

This has been designed to be an enjoyable and convenient way for you to build your collection.

When you receive your first knife you will also receive a reservation card for the next knife in the series, with your matching registry number. If you wish to reserve the next knife, submit the payment for it, or authorize the charge to your credit card. You can skip any knives you wish—there is no minimum purchase requirement. And no knives will be sent unless you reserve them. It is as simple as that.

Complimentary Display and Master Cases

With each knife you will also receive a complimentary miniature display drawer, richly covered and lined with deep blue velvet. With your ninth knife, you will be presented free of charge, a master case into which each drawer can be slipped, for neatly grouping and displaying the entire Series.

In the bottom of each display drawer, you will also receive a miniature Certificate of Au-

thenticity and Silver Purity, bearing the knife's limited edition registry number. This registry number will be reserved exclusively for you without obligation for each knife in the series so you can acquire a complete matched set. The certificate will also attest to the edition limit of only seventy-five hundred, worldwide. To make the knife all the more interesting, you will also receive a miniature pamphlet which tells the wartime history of the knife.

Following this knife series, you will also receive a private invitation describing the next series of miniature solid Sterling Silver arms—Famous Military Pistols and Rifles. If you wish, these will then be made available to you—with your matching registry number and on a convenient systematic subscription basis.

Considering that this is the first time in history that a limited edition miniature Sterling Silver arms series has ever been issued, you are invited to call the special 24-hour toll free reservation number or mail your reservation at once to avoid disappointment. This is available only through The American Historical Foundation. Make sure you are included in this exciting trip through the world of arms collecting and military history—in miniature.

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I enclose \$39 for the solid Sterling Silver Miniature Fairbairn-Sykes Fighting Knife with velvet-lined display drawer, Certificate of Authenticity, and miniature wartime history pamphlet. Please send information in the months ahead about subsequent arms in this series, which I am guaranteed the right, without obligation, to acquire with matching registry numbers. No knife will be sent unless I reserve it, and there is no minimum purchase required. All handling and shipping charges are included.

Name:

Address:

For Visa, MasterCard or American Express, kindly send account number, expiration date and signature, Virginia residents please add tax. ©1981 AHF



FLAK

RECONS REMEMBERED ...

Sirs:

The SOF pieces on Marine Recon (May, August '81) brought back

memories. There were several Marine Recons undergoing basic airborne training with us, and they lived in the same barracks in which I was quartered, so we had plenty of contact with them.



**BEWARE OF
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LEGENDS.**

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GERBER
Legendary Blades

The Legend Lives On.

Despite mild interservice rivalry and some conflict, the Recons impressed some of us with their fitness and general insanity. Once some Recons in my barracks had a live hand grenade which they'd picked up. They successfully and resourcefully juggled it from one man to another during a general shakedown and search of our barracks one evening.

The ranking Recon man in our jump-school company was an E-5. His *esprit de corps* apparently wouldn't permit him to allow an Army term like "Airborne" to cross his lips, for every time the rest of us were required to shout it, he'd shout, "Recon!" — despite the fact that it cost him several-hundred push-ups a day. On one of our qualifying jumps, he got a Mae West but didn't realize it. He heard the bullhorns commanding, "You with the Mae West! Pull your reserve!" and wondered what dummy was coming in with one. When he checked his own chute, it was too late: He came straight in with his head thrown back, and totally unprepared to land. The impact must have been terrible, but it didn't seem to faze him, not even when he got 10 for a lousy landing.

My clearest memory of the Recons, though, was the night that the TAC-office PA system came on and announced, "Will the Marine who wants to quit jump school report to the TAC office?" The Marine E-5 whipped out of our barracks and down to the TAC office. He grabbed the microphone and announced, "There ain't no Marine gonna drop out of jump school!"

He was right.

Sincerely,
Bob Harvey
Paonia, Colorado

HOW A BECAME C ...

Sirs:

I would like to point out an error in your September '81 issue on page 25. I am only 15 years old, but even I know that in "Commando Quiz," number 7, the Uzi submachine gun, is letter A (you can verify this on page 46 by checking it with "SOF Tests the Uzis"). In the answers to "Commando Quiz" on page 79, the Uzi, number 7, should be A not C; C should be number 9, the M16; number 8 is letter B, the AK-47.

Keep up the good work — we kids are watching (and they say wisdom comes with age)!

Sincerely,
Kristin J. Russo
Portland, Maine

We've been inundated with letters regarding our typesetting goof in the answers to "Commando Quiz" — thanks to all you sharp readers who wrote to correct us. — The Eds.

Continued on page 74

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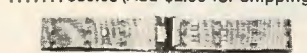
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COMBAT PISTOLCRAFT



Trends in IPSC Gear & Course Design

Ken Hackathorn

HAVING attended the 1981 United States Practical Pistol Championships at Yorktown, Va., I'd like to comment on trends in IPSC course design and gear, since SOF covers the match itself on p. 22. The Lafayette Gun Club, host of this year's championship, provided fine-quality staff and range officials who created one of the smoothest national events ever held in this country.

IPSC practical-shooting discipline requires that each event be different from all others in order to provide a new problem for the competitor to solve, resulting in a varied, challenging test of skill. The Lafayette Gun Club made the 1981 U.S. Nationals a good shooting contest. It set up an excellent indoor dark-house shoot that was expertly run and proved extremely enlightening.

Shooters who had Nite-Sites installed on their weapons before the Nationals were well rewarded — as the scoreboard

showed — since they were way ahead of the rest. This sight, offered by Nite-Site, Inc., Dept. SOF, P.O. Box O, Rosemount, MN 55068, was one of the most controversial items at this year's Nationals. Called trick sights by some, they were simply devastating for use in the dark.

IPSC history has always shown that if an item is practical for street use and works well in competition, then it's a good thing to have. The Nite-Site system is simple, reliable — and it works. After the match, many competitors sent off their fancy match guns to be modified by Nite-Site, but the smarter people sent off their duty guns or carry pieces for this modification.

The U.S. IPSC leadership has decided not to adopt the controversial United Kingdom holster rule at this time. This rule would require that the holster be acceptable for everyday concealed carry

but, in competition, gun and holster may be worn in the open. The concealment rule is designed to set a standard for legal holsters. Police officers and soldiers are permitted to wear their duty rigs if they so desire.

At the Nationals I noted that at least 80 percent of the competitors were using holsters that would qualify under the U.K. holster rule, although I saw a few competition rigs still in use by some top competitors. The trend is toward serious, everyday, practical leather, and walk-and-draw rigs will soon be things of the past. Gordon Davis' "Usher International" cross-draw rig remains the favorite for big-name competitors. Although it does not quite meet the U.K. rule, it is still a big step in the right direction.

Bianchi's Chapman Hi-Ride remains the most popular holster, because it is the easiest to obtain — shooters can buy it over-the-counter instead of waiting for a custom leather holster. Dick Nichols of Bianchi recently introduced a new version of this holster. It is modified for normal strong-side carry and has a slight FBI cant — an increasingly popular position now that the U.K. holster rule is becoming more widely accepted. This new Bianchi hip rig will soon be as common as the cross-draw version of the Chapman Hi-Ride.

Many competitors used strong-side hip holsters by makers such as Milt Sparks and Gordon Davis. Sparks' No. 1 AT is well-liked by practical pistoleros, as is Davis' "Realist" holster. Both are good designs and highly recommended. A few 1981 Nationals competitors kept such street rigs as inside-the-pants holsters and belt slides, and I believe that the trend of the future will be toward realistic practical holsters.

I wrote about Bill Rogers' E-Z Loader in my August column. Since then, this small, plastic, add-on accessory, designed to aid fast magazine change, has swept the country. A small funnel secured by the pistol stocks, it really does increase magazine-change speed. At the Nationals, nearly everyone had one on his pistol. Those who did not mobbed Austin Behlert's display to get one. Priced at \$9.95, the E-Z Loader was a bargain — especially since Comstock scoring was used in a couple of the events. Another popular item made by Rogers was the "Idaho Speedloader," a single-magazine pouch. Requiring a fast magazine change, most of the top-20 shooters used one to aid in that fast reload.

The 1981 Nationals' standard exercises foreshadowed those that will be fired in the World match later this year. I believe that IPSC shooting need not be complex in order to be realistic, and that as national and international contests have become more complex, their

Continued on page 76

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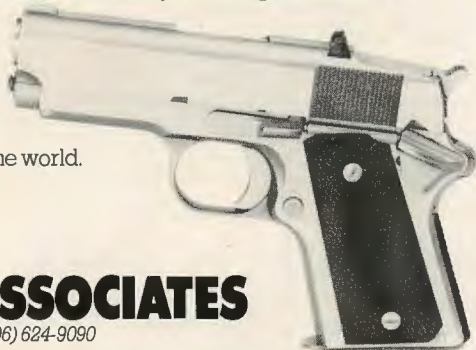
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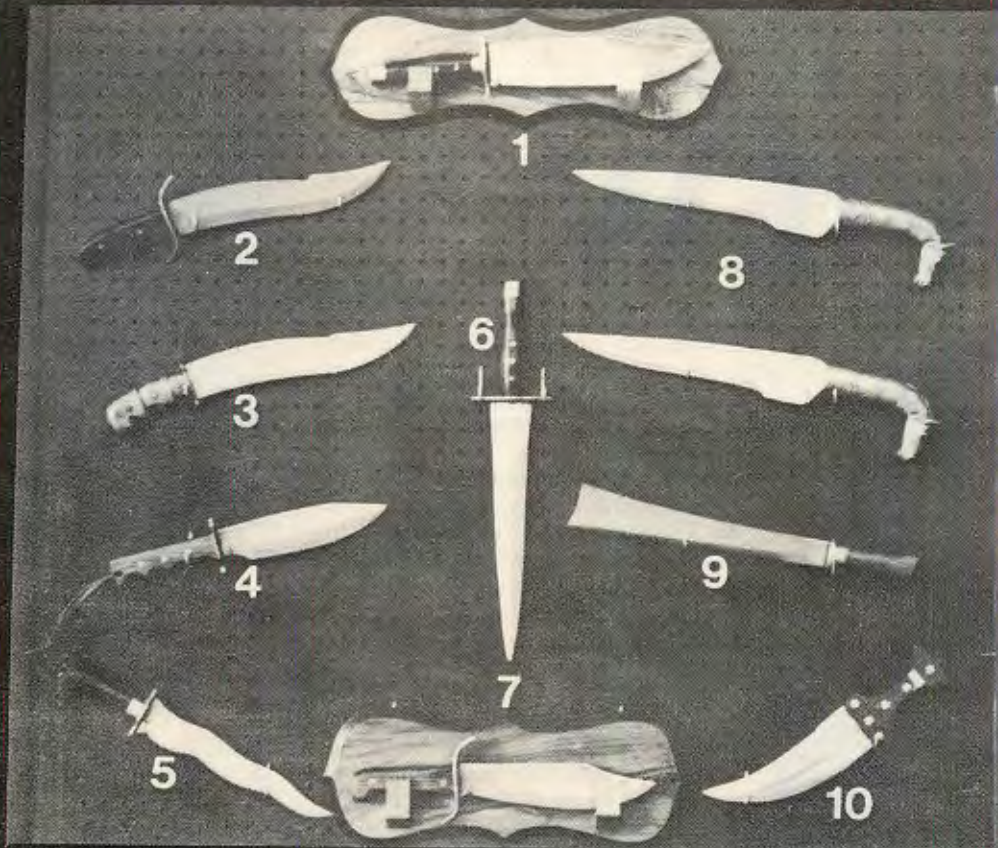
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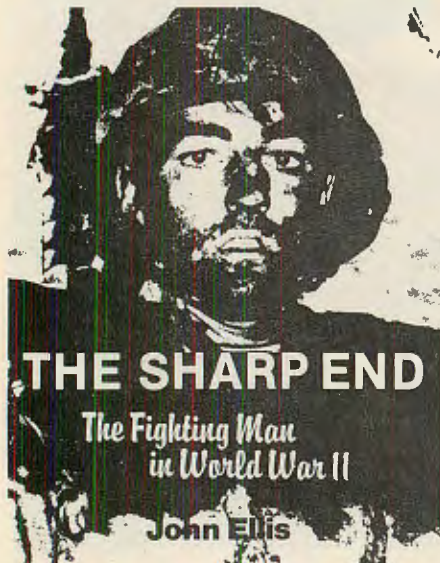
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SF

IN REVIEW



THE SHARP END: Fighting Men in World War Two. By John Ellis. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 396 pp. \$17.95. Review by Fred Reed.

THE *Sharp End* is one of those rare, excellent books that make a reviewer's job enjoyable: Well written, it recounts WWII from the point of view of the men doing the fighting — the men in the tanks, the trenches, artillery, hospitals, and in training. Many books have attempted to do this; few have succeeded.

Much of the strength of the book comes from Ellis' extensive use of well-chosen accounts by men who were there. Anyone with military experience will immediately recognize the familiar misery, terror and shove-it-Mac irreverence of the real army under fire.

A tank crewman speaking of a brutally protracted advance: "One time we didn't get out of the tanks even once for four days. Heavy artillery, 88s, mortars, screaming mimis pounding in all around us. You got out of the tank to take a leak and you were a dead duck. We used our damn helmets and dumped them out of the turret."

From another tanker: "A tank that is mortally hit belches forth long searing tongues of orange flame from every hatch. As ammunition explodes in the interior, the hull is racked by violent convulsions and sparks erupt from the spout of the barrel like the fireballs of a Roman candle. Silver rivulets of molten aluminum pour from the engine like tears . . . When the inferno subsides, gallons of

lubricating oil in the power train and hundreds of pounds of rubber on the tracks and bogey wheels continue to burn, spewing dense clouds of black smoke over the funeral pyre."

Another: "In one case the trapped crew had been broiled in such a way that a puddle of fat had spread from under the tank and this was quilted with brilliant flies of all descriptions and colors."

Another: "It is a good thing not to be too squeamish; the smell of septic limbs and heads is enough to bowl one over. As usual a good many deaths; one had the back of his head off . . . But it is the multiple wounds that appear worst, men almost in pieces; the number intensifies the horror; we get so few slight cases."

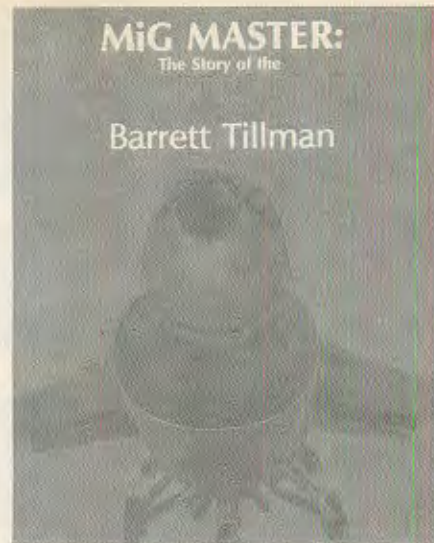
The book, which is only as macabre as war itself, has chapters on relaxation, living conditions, morale, and other aspects of life in and near the lines. For those interested in military history, or just in good reading, *The Sharp End* is a book not to miss.

MILITARY SMALL ARMS AMMUNITION OF THE WORLD, 1945-1980. By P. Labbet. San Rafael, Calif.: Presidio Press. 1980. 128 pp. Illustrated. \$18.95. Review by Eugene A. Barron.

THIS book will be for some time the basic reference manual for small-arms (smaller than 20mm cartridge) identification and specification. The author has overlooked nothing that would be of value to one investigating this area.

The book is divided into five sections. The first two cover cartridge components, nomenclature, identification procedure and a history of ammunition development through 1939. The third section covers cartridge improvements from 1939 to 1945. The longest section of the book profiles individual cartridges from the 6.35mm Browning SL pistol to the huge 15mm BESA. The final section gives a geographical register of ammunition producers and users alphabetically by country, followed by color-identification codes, and description of packaging by various countries. The appendix assists in deciphering non-Western alphabets and numerals. There are also metric-to-inch conversion tables and a list of commonly used abbreviations.

Military Small Arms Ammunition will appeal to weapons buffs and to those needing a basic reference manual for background or identification purposes.



MiG MASTER: The Story of the F-8 Crusader. By Barrett Tillman. The Nautical & Aviation Publishing Company, 8 Randall Street, Annapolis, MD 21401. Illustrated. 224 pp. 1980. \$17.95. Review by Capt. Jerry Lee.

THIS is another aircraft history by SOF contributor Barrett Tillman, and his first chronicle of a Vietnam warbird. Tillman details the development of the Crusader from design specification to standardization, as well as subsequent improvements and modifications, and tells the history of its service with the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps. Separate chapters recount the use of the F-8 in Vietnam, and describe every encounter between U.S. Crusaders and North Vietnamese MiGs.

Tillman seems to have collected every interesting story ever told about the Crusader, including some incredible ones. There are seven known cases of Crusaders taking off with wings folded, a mistake which usually costs the Navy an airplane. In every case involving an F-8, the plane landed safely. But the most incredible story is the one about the Crusader which landed itself after the pilot ejected. He had made an unsuccessful arrested landing attempt, and punched out on the next pass when his engine failed. The pilotless plane caught the arresting wires and landed with only minor damage. The pilot went down in history as the jet jockey whose plane flew better without him.

MiG Master is full of technical jargon which means little to non-aviator types, but a glossary is provided for the uninitiated. This is a well-told, enjoyable story of an aircraft which is undeniably significant in the history of naval aviation.

Capt. Jerry Lee, USAR, writes frequently for SOF. He has reported on, among other things, combat in the late war in Rhodesia.



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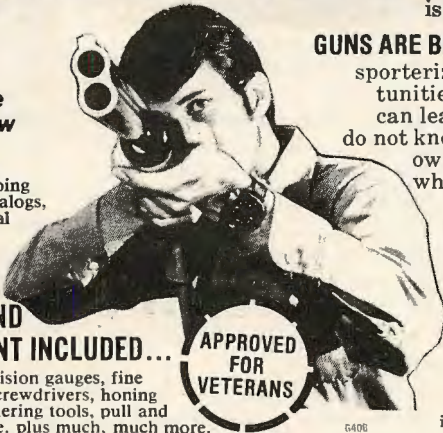
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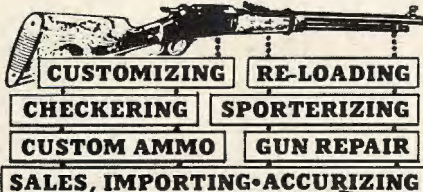
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It Happened To Me

by Juan Gozier
as told to M.L. Jones

Juan Gozier is now a state traffic officer with the California Highway Patrol. In August 1969 he was on his second tour of duty in Vietnam as a helicopter doorunner with Co. B, 228th Assault Helicopter Bn., 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile). As he tells it:

WE were resupplying elements of the 7th Cav around Song Be at a new landing zone (LZ) that was still being cut. There were no bunkers. It was raining like hell and the grunts were huddled under their shelter halves, trying to stay dry. Every time our Shithook (CH-47A Chinook) came in to unload ammo and food, the 100mph downdraft of the rotor blades blew the shelter halves to hell and back. Although we were supplying the grunts with necessities, I knew we were pissing them off every time we flew in.

After our last sortie to the LZ, we pulled pitch (scattering more tents) and

became airborne. Suddenly I heard three distinct pops in rapid succession and then a loud TACK. The big bird lurched to the left.

"Receiving fire, three o'clock! Yellow smoke out! Permission to fire!" I yelled through the intercom. The flight engineer (FE) and crew chief looked at me as though I had flipped out.

The aircraft commander (AC) said, "Negative. We're over friendly country."

Friendly? I'd heard the shots and knew we had taken a round. We landed at Tay Ninh to refuel and I asked the FE to shut down so I could examine the bird for damage. He thought I was crazy but agreed.

I knew I was flying with a "cherry" crew: All the people in the flight platoons, including the pilots, had cherries drawn in red grease pencil behind their names on the flight roster. After their ship received and was struck by enemy fire, the cherries would be erased. We all went over the bird with a fine-toothed comb but couldn't find any holes.

"It's just your imagination, kid," the rest of the crew laughed.

I asked, "Didn't anyone feel the ship lurch or hear the loud TACK when we were hit?"

"It was just turbulence," the AC said. "I don't know why the hell you were

dropping smoke and making such a fuss."

I was pissed. These sissies had been shot at and didn't even know it. I wasn't a cherry. I'd been shot at before.

We flew back to Bear Cat and I told Maj. Donald Fine, the company commander, what had happened.

"Are you sure, Hoss?" he asked.

"Skipper, I swear we took a round!"

We both went back to the bird and re-examined it but couldn't find any damage. I was just about to give up when I saw a small hole through the right-aft landing gear.

"Skipper!" I yelled.

There it was. Obviously not a .50, smaller than an AK. A perfect .223 hole, through and through.

"We were right over that new LZ when we took the round," I said. "Those grunts were mighty pissed when we kept blowing their tents down."

Maj. Fine and I both knew what had happened. He told the crew that I was not crazy and we had taken a round somewhere near Song Be. The green crew immediately ran over to the flight roster and erased their cherries. You should have heard the stories in the club that night — and especially the FE, telling everyone how he was almost blown out of the sky by "enemy" fire.



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I Was There

by John A. Maez
as told to M.L. Jones

Sgt. John A. Maez, now retired and living in Michigan with his grandson, has been a policeman most of his life. He served five years with the Lubbock, Texas, PD and retired after 20 years with the San Antonio, Texas, PD. As he tells it:

I was 46 years old that May afternoon in 1972, and only two years away from retirement. I was considered an "old man" by the newer patrolmen. Actually, I was senior sergeant working traffic investigations, and far removed from most of the street crimes that get into the newspapers — hardly the type of cop that one might expect to get involved in a shootout with two armed robbers.

I was completing some notes at the scene of a fatal hit-and-run accident that had occurred two days before. An elderly man had been run down by a motorcyclist and died en route to the

hospital. The unfortunate accident victim was a deaf-mute who could not hear the approach of the speeding motorcycle roaring around the corner as he stepped off the curb.

Finishing my report, I decided to get a cup of coffee at a nearby diner. As I entered, I didn't notice that the owner was standing ramrod stiff behind the counter.

Suddenly, someone yelled, "COPS!!" This shout was followed by a tremendous blast and what felt like a hard shove against my right leg, forcing me backward through the doorway and down to the sidewalk.

I had walked into a hold-up in progress. I had been shot, possibly with a shotgun, judging from the way the pain was spreading over my entire right leg. I didn't know if I had been hit anywhere else, or how seriously I was wounded. I only knew I had been shot and whoever did it might try to finish the job. I drew my service revolver, loaded with 158-grain hollowpoint .38 Special +P ammunition. Sounds good — but someone had just used a shotgun on me and there might be more than one assailant. From my prone position on the sidewalk, I steadied the gun with both hands and pointed it toward the doorway of the diner.

I was in bad shape strategically —

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wounded and too far from my car to get to either the radio or my shotgun — and I didn't know how many robbers were involved or how they were armed. Seconds after I was hit — it seemed longer — two men appeared in the doorway. They apparently wanted out and I was lying on the sidewalk, blocking their exit. One of them began to raise his hand toward me. In it was a small-caliber semiautomatic pistol. My only thought was, "This may be the day I die!" I immediately opened fire and something whizzed past my head. Then I saw the gunman collapse to the floor of the diner.

The other suspect, a younger man, apparently unnerved by the shooting, threw down his gun. He raised his hands high over his head without being told to do so. It was all over in less than 30 seconds.

My watch commander, Lt. Fred Peische, came to see me later in the hospital. He filled me in on the details of what went down: I was hit in my upper right thigh by a partial charge of pellets fired by the younger suspect from a .410-gauge shotgun pistol from a distance of about 20 feet. If I'd been closer, I would have taken the full charge, which might have blown off my leg. (As it was, my wounds were not serious, and I was back on duty in less than four weeks.)

One suspect was dead. Somehow I had managed to shoot him six times. The suspect who had shot me was in custody. He not only confessed to this attempted robbery, but also to three other armed robberies he and his partner had pulled off. No one else was hurt in the robbery attempt. The owner of the diner, the only other person present, was only shaken by the incident.

Just as the lieutenant prepared to leave, he looked back at me in my hospital bed and said, "You had an armed felon surrender to you and you were holding an empty gun. Close, Sarge. Very close!"



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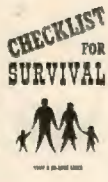


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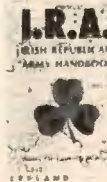


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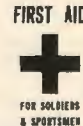
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All of the above will be available in the early autumn. PMC claims pricing will provide substantial savings; PMC's master distributor nationwide will handle sales.

For more information, write to Robbie Robinson, *Patton and Morgan Company*, Dept. SOF, 405 Park Avenue, Suite 904, New York, NY 10022.



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IPSC NATIONALS

SOF Sponsors A Winner

Text & Photos by Jake Jatras



JOHN Shaw, sponsored by *Soldier of Fortune* Magazine, set a new standard in the International Practical Shooting Confederation (IPSC) competition held 22-27 June. In a stunning display of shooting skill, Shaw won his second United States Championship — becoming the only shooter ever to do so.

From the outset it was apparent that Shaw was going to set a fast pace at this year's contest. The course was a relatively short test: six matches, using a minimum of 114 rounds. Any error on the part of any of the top 20 shooters might move him down five to 10 places.

Match One, "Vanishing Acts," was a standard exercise using John Farnam's turning targets and quick par times. From a possible 150 points to be scored, John Shaw tallied 146 to win the match. Each match was worth 15 points to the winner, and a percentage of that to the other shooters. So Shaw received 15 points for Match One; second place Craig Gifford received 14.6918.

Match Two, "Metal and Motion,"

LEFT: John Shaw fires Clark-custom-modified Colt .45 from "Rhodesian" wall. Shaw is first IPSC competitor to win back-to-back national titles. **BELOW:** Texan John Dixon reloads Colt .45 as he exits elevated tunnel on assault course. Photo: Tom Stewart

was a moving-target match conducted as a concealed-carry contest. Each shooter had to engage two steel "Pepper Poppers" prior to firing at the running-man target which moved when the shooter released an electronic start button.

The draw on this stage was important, and some shooters discovered that drawing from under a jacket slowed them up. (I am pleased to report that all contestants passed the inspection for concealment.) John Shaw once again demonstrated his celerity by taking first place in this match.

Match Three, "Smash, Crash and Dash," was an assault course. The shooters had the option of beginning the course from either the right side or the left. All targets were steel "poppers." The stage included a high window with a shutter, a low window, a "Rhodesian" wall, a climbing wall and an elevated tunnel with two firing ports. Scoring was strictly by time, and Raul Walters of Columbia, Mo., won with a time of 49 seconds. John Shaw was close behind with 49.3 seconds.

Match Four, "Shoot and Scoot," at first looked simple, but the short match proved a stumbling block to many of the U.S. title aspirants. Each shooter had to begin in a shooting box. At the start signal, the contestant drew and engaged two steel "poppers" and then dashed to a

waist-high guard rail. Within three seconds of the "go" signal, an IPSC target, only visible from the rail area, would swing out. It had to be hit twice, as did two other targets which followed it and then finally the stop plate had to be hit once.

Mickey Fowler edged one of the metal knock-downs, but it failed to go over. Unfortunately, he had already started toward the rail, an extremely costly trip. Tom Campbell also experienced some difficulty with the first two targets: He took off and then realized that the left steel "popper" remained standing. He backtracked to the shooting area, only to see the swing-out target come and go: He fired and then once again headed for the rail. The miss cost him penalty points for not engaging the swing-out target. One champion shooter who remained unperturbed was Colorado's Ross Seyfried. Seyfried won the match and the 15 points.

Match Five, "Midnight Encounters," was the night-shoot event. Night shooting is an important part of IPSC competition, and normally the shooters are allowed some type of artificial or natural light to aid in picking up their sights.

This year the dark shoot was conducted in extremely dim light. Even the finest shooters had difficulty on this course, and although the ranges did not exceed 15 meters on the indoor range, scores over 100 out of a



possible 120 were scarce. Many shooters had installed special radioactive sights for this match that definitely gave them an edge. The special sights appear normal in daylight but glow in complete darkness — making it possible to get a basic sight picture before firing.

Mickey Fowler won this match with an outstanding 113 points. His fellow Californian, Mike Dalton, was second with 105 points.

Match Six, "Metal Magic," was another in which running was necessary and shooters had to engage targets from various openings. The match was scored by time only, and John

Shaw completed the course in 23.3 seconds to win this stage.

As in the past, the top 16 shooters met on the final day of the Nationals to compete not only for the U.S. Championship, but for the opportunity to be on either the U.S. Gold or Silver team for the World Championship in Africa.

This year's match was a close one. Going into the shoot-offs, John Shaw had a slight lead, but there were three or four contestants close behind and determined to take the title. The shoot-off involved not only the ability to shoot, but the ability to decide swiftly which targets were to be

engaged. Steel targets were arranged in banks of two, at 10, 12 and 15 yards. Each set of targets had a color combination: Red/White, Blue/Red, and White/Blue. A computerized random-number generator supplied the color combinations to a Christmas-tree light bar in front of the shooters.

The start signal was the lights coming on. If the blue and yellow came on (the yellow light was the stop plate and always appeared), the shooters were to engage all blue targets, then the stop plate. If only the yellow light appeared, each shooter would simply knock his can off the table in front of him, then draw and hit the stop plate.

THE TOP 16

1. John Shaw Memphis, TN	89.33580
2. Lanny Provience Germantown, TN	88.08000
3. Mike Plaxco Roland, AR	86.65790
4. Nick Pruitt Piru, CA	86.26620
5. Craig Gifford Bakersfield, CA	86.26620
6. Ross Seyfried Roggen, CO	83.13370
7. Mickey Fowler Glendale, CA	82.58070
8. Raul Walters Columbia, MO	81.89090
9. Don Middlebrooks Hampton, VA	80.32810
10. Robert Leatham Mesa, AZ	79.25300
11. Mike Dalton Mission Hills, CA	78.25300
12. Bill Wilson Berryville, AR	77.68760
13. Brian Enos Mesa, AZ	76.60750
14. Michael Call Albany, GA	73.65570
15. Tom Campbell Huntington, MA	73.27350
16. Chip McCormick Austin, TX	72.13250



ABOVE: SOF-sponsored 1981 IPSC Champion John Shaw drops off wall on assault course while preparing to reload on way to tunnel by releasing magazine from Clark-custom-modified Colt .45. BELOW: Mike Plaxco heads for "Rhodesian" wall after firing Colt .45 at high window barricade on "Smash, Crash and Dash" course.

UPPER RIGHT: Colt .45 (by Fisher) at ready, Ross Seyfried takes off on "Metal Magic" course. RIGHT: Ross Seyfried, holding Colt .45 (by Fisher), comes off wall on assault course.





This happened a few times. Mike Dalton, upon seeing only the yellow light come on, drew and hit the stop plate in 1.16 seconds! If all the lights came on, the shooters had to engage all the targets and the stop plate. This also occurred more than once.

If there is a reigning monarch in the man-vs-man contest, it must be Nick Pruitt. To draw him in this kind of competition is a quick route to the loser column. When Rich Nichols of Bianchi made the presentation for the shoot-off champion, no one was surprised that Nick Pruitt received the trophy.

While the steady Pruitt was racking up win after win in each bout, the jostle for the final standings continued. Lanny Provice surprised everyone with his quick shooting and bumped a few shooters to take second place, which insured victory for John Shaw. Mike Plaxco came in third, Nick Pruitt fourth and Craig Gifford fifth. The second five were: Ross Seyfried, Mickey Fowler, Raul Walters, Don Middlebrooks and Robert Leatham.

Next year the 1982 IPSC U.S. Regional Championships will be held in Illinois the last week of September. Can John Shaw become a three-time winner? Plan on attending to find out. For information on the event write me, Jake Jatras, P.O. Box 626, Sioux City, IA 51102. I will also be happy to supply you with information on practical shooting.



THAILAND'S UNKNOWN WAR

A Soldier's Untold Story

by Don Dickinson



IT was a rainy night in the jungle as the LURPs buried their four comrades, including their leader, Sub-Lt. Phot Ratanai. They worked silently, the fatigue, the strain of combat and the feeling of loss heavy upon them. From each of the dead the little finger had been removed, put in a plastic bag and tagged. Unable to immediately remove the dead from the field because their mission demanded they move onward, they kept the fingers so the families would have something for cremation. As the men departed for battles ahead, they said a silent farewell to their fallen. This part of the jungle would be theirs to guard. Forever.

The war in which Phot Ratanai and the three patrolmen were killed is virtually unknown outside of Thailand. In Thailand itself, Phot would be listed among the others who had fallen over the course of the conflict. His story

Thai unit leader consults map while soldier kneels nearby with M16.

Photo: Bangkok Daily News

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Don Dickinson was born in Thailand, where his parents worked in the field of rural education. His family moved back to Canada in 1969 when he was 10 years old. Dickinson went back to Thailand for a three-month visit in 1977. He met and talked with a number of men who had been through the Khao Khor battle. He is fluent in English and Thai. His book, *Letters from Motherland*, was published in both languages. At the present time, Dickinson is serving with the 2 Combat Engineer Regiment of Canada. He is airborne-qualified. —C.E.D. Kite

should be told. People should know of his sacrifice. The war in which he fought may not be well known, but it is important to the survival of Thailand and its struggles against its communist enemies, internal and external. To illustrate that fight, it is necessary to tell of the men who carry on the struggle. Phot was one of them.

Phot was born on 18 January 1952, in Chiangmai, northern Thailand. He was one of three sons of Capt. Dr. Kanok and Mrs. Bang Orn Ratanai.

The Pra Chulachom Klao Military Academy graduated Phot as a sub-lieutenant in the Ordnance Corps in 1974. In that same year, the young officer completed the ranger course, which entitled him to the badge showing a tiger with a sword clenched between its teeth. At this time the Ratanai family lost their first son, Rhut, a pilot who was killed when his Royal Thai Air

Force jet crashed during a training flight.

In August 1974, Phot was posted to Pitsanuloke Province as a deputy commander, Armory Platoon, Ordnance Field Resupply Company, 3rd Combat Support Command. The Ordnance Corps was not where Phot really wanted to be; the infantry was more to his liking. But he was where he was needed and he performed well. One of his superiors, Capt. Manit Tipayanet, remembers Phot: "He always worked hard, with determination. His personal performance was evident to me. He was a person with a kind heart, loving and sympathetic to those under him, not taking advantage of them. He did not speak much and was well-liked by his commander and those he commanded."

The job of the Armory Platoon was to maintain weapons for resupply to the field. In its support role, it was based in the rear, out of the line of the fire. Phot felt restless in this position. He asked repeatedly for field duty but, due to a shortage of ordnance officers, he was turned down.

But Phot's aspirations were not lost upon his superiors. They thought that to have such a strong young man commanding an armory would be a waste of his abilities. In January 1975, Phot applied for the Long Range Patrol course and was accepted. After completing the course in March at Pak Chong, he returned to the ordnance company. Shortly afterward, there was a need for tiger-scout instructors, and Phot was transferred to the 4th Long Range Patrol Company. He was where he wanted to be.

Phot knew that working in a LURP unit would be demanding — physically and psychologically — as well as dangerous. But he went to work with determination, winning the same affection and respect that he had in the ordnance company.

Phot's parents knew what type of work he was doing. But the Ratanais were a military family. They knew Phot was likely to choose the army as his profession.

After the death of his brother, Mrs. Bang Orn took Phot's birth date to several fortunetellers. They said his luck was bad and his lifeline cut. It was decided that he should become a monk for a period — a tradition in Thailand to take away bad luck. Phot spent 10 days as a Buddhist monk, studying religion and meditation.

While these events took place in Phot's life, things were happening in Thailand which later affected him. On 14 October 1973, the government of General Thanom was forced to resign by student riots. The civilian governments that followed were weak. The conflict between the government and the communist party of Thailand grew heated, politically and militarily.

The communists benefited from the



Thai trooper with M16 moves through jungle during Khao Khor ops. Photo: Bangkok Daily News

weak governments. Left-wing students and politicians kept things politically unstable. That members of the left had communist connections later became obvious.

This could not help but affect the military situation. To the men in the field, the political rumblings in Bangkok were disturbing. While men died, the left attacked the government's anti-communist campaign, stating that no threat existed. The left claimed that communist terrorists (CTs) were imagined by the government. This did not sit well with those who risked their lives daily against such "imagination." From the public, the left received little support, but they remained vocal.

Inspired by this unrest, the terrorists stepped up their fight. Contacts and casualties increased. The climax, militarily, would be reached at a hilly, jungled region called Khao Khor in Pitsanuloke Province in the north. There the communists had established themselves. Khao Khor was isolated and its terrain rugged.

The troops were eager to vent their anger and get revenge for their friends who had been killed or injured. On 10 June 1976, an RTAF F-5E was shot down in the Khao Khor area. Flying Officer Pongnarong Kasetsuk was missing. The resulting battle was to be the most intense in Thailand in recent years. CPM (Civilian, Police, Military) 1617 was the unit in the immediate area. It was its task to search for the pilot and clear Khao Khor of the CTs.

On 13 June, dawn was clear and bright. At 1500 hours, units taking part in the operation were called to an orders group. The CPM commander started the session by stating tasks and objectives; then the operations staff added some details: 14 June 1976 would be the day. At the end of the meeting, everyone went to his unit to make final preparations.

Eleven units, consisting of 12 to 15 men each, would be helicopter-lifted into the operational area. That evening, troops from 3rd Army Area Forward Command arrived at Lomsak Air Base. Six helicopters and a number of light observation planes landed at the base. The pilots, who had seen much action, were in high spirits. Unit leaders met again to study maps and terrain. All troops were restricted to base after 1800.

At 0500 on 14 June 1976, Operation *Ruam Jai 10* (United Spirits 10) started. The units moved to Thung Samor base. From there, they flew by helicopter to the LZ. This group received the name *Khun Suk* (Warrior or War Lord).

As the last troops landed, the LZ got hot. The last chopper turned back because of heavy ground fire. A helicopter mechanic aboard was injured. The pilot reported that the CTs were charging the choppers from all directions. *Khun Suk* had landed in the middle of the CTs' den.



The troops, though under heavy fire, spread out and secured the LZ. They took casualties from the first moment on the ground. Unit leaders, practicing lead-from-the-front leadership, numbered among the dead and wounded. They were hard-pressed, but the troops fought until relieved. Most of the casualties sustained in Khao Khor occurred during the initial assault by *Khun Suk*.

Khun Suk reported to HQ that it had set up a temporary position on a hill 400 meters from the LZ. Heavy ground fire prevented evacuation of the wounded and hampered efforts to supply the unit. Back at Lomsak, those supporting the operation worked to get supplies through. At one point, the water shortage was so severe that men drank their own urine to relieve their thirst.

From the battle reports, it was clear that *Khun Suk* needed assistance. Eight operational units and one rescue-and-recovery unit were formed. Named Naresuan, after the great Thai warrior king, it was composed of men from 301 Special Operations Unit, the Paratroops and 919th Infantry Battalion. Phot's 4th LRRP Company belonged to the 301 Special Operation Unit.

Phot was in Camp Saritsena, the 301 base, when he was ordered to prepare two tiger-scout units for immediate deployment. The tiger scouts volunteered to serve under Phot. Arriving at Lomsak Air Base, he met an old friend, Capt. Manit Tipayanet, from his days with the ordnance company. Capt. Manit now served in Lomsak with another ordnance field resupply company.

Thai troopers outside CT hut with M16s. Photo: Bangkok Daily News



Capt. Phot Ratanai.
Photo: Dr. and Mrs. Kanok Ratanai



Capt. Manit talked with Phot at the air force club while awaiting orders. Phot was excited, thinking of the task at hand. It was his first major operation and he was determined to do a good job. The captain invited Phot to dinner, but he declined, saying he had to eat with his men. They ate and slept on a large concrete floor.

On the morning of 17 June 1976, the troops were ready. Capt. Manit had bags of sticky rice cooked for Phot and his men while they awaited the choppers. He noticed that Phot was anxious to leave. Waiting was hard for him. That day the operation was postponed because of rain.

The next day, 18 June 1976, Naresuan went into battle. Before Phot left, Capt. Manit gave him a bowie knife, wished him good luck and told him they would probably see each other by the 28th. From Thung Samor base, Naresuan chopper-assaulted the Khao Khor area. Phot commanded Naresuan Units 7 and 8 — 30 tiger scouts in all. They would fight their way to *Khun Suk*.

At 0800 they hit the LZ. Again heavy fire turned away a chopper. But Naresuan soon made contact with a small group of CTs. They dealt with them quickly. Cornfields and huts were discovered; the huts were burned. Naresuan maintained daily contact with the CTs. They captured and destroyed permanent bunkers and living quarters. On 26 June 1976, Naresuan took the main communist camp. The camp, which consisted of living quarters, rice-storage facilities, bunkers and tunnels, was searched and destroyed. The closer

to *Khun Suk* the units got, the more Naresuan's fighting spirit increased.

According to plan, 22 June 1976, the 3rd Army Area deployed more units to the operational area. Unit *Somdej* (majesty), Mengrai (a great Thai king), *Asawin* (knight) and Pichai (a famous Thai warrior) moved on the CTs from all sides. Naresuan and *Khun Suk*, operating in the Kaek River area, received the news enthusiastically.

Naresuan had gone in with five days' rations. It needed resupplies. Because of the jungle and the constant contacts, this was difficult. As for water, every time it rained, the men felt that years had been added to their lives. The evacuation of the wounded posed a serious problem. Phot had been shot at several days before while getting water at the Kaek Noi River. He taunted the communists. The CTs replied with fire, just missing him. Phot later raised his hands in respect to Buddha for protecting him.

On 28 June 1976, Phot's Units 7 and 8 led the move to the Kaek River. They made contact at 1645.

The two men immediately behind Phot were killed instantly. Phot reacted by firing three magazines at the source of the fire — bushes to his right. As he loaded the fourth mag he felt a sharp pain in his leg. Phot fell down, his leg red with blood, still firing. One of his men ran up and gave him covering fire. A grenade killed and wounded more men.

The clash grew as other Naresuan units joined the battle. The three dead and the three wounded, including Phot, were brought out of the line of fire.

Naresuan units cleared an LZ to evacuate them, but the medevac was turned back by heavy fire. It was late in the day, with darkness approaching, so the medevac had to wait until the next day. Phot was wounded in the leg by gunfire and the grenade had shattered the bones in his right arm and wounded his head. He suffered a concussion from the grenade blast. Throughout the previous days, Phot had been an inspiration to his men. Now that he was hurt, he did not want them to lose heart.

Phot had 500 baht in his pocket, which he gave to Sgt. Luan. He said cheerfully that they would use it for drinks at the Amarin Hotel. Then he took off his necklace of Buddha amulets — often worn by Thai soldiers — and gave it to Sgt. Luan, saying, "Keep them for your protection. I'll be all right. I won't die easily. My bones are strong and my luck is good."

Naresuan was trying to fight its way across Kaek River. Naresuan and *Somdej* were on opposite banks of the river and trying to link up. On the morning of the 29th the casualties from *Somdej* unit were medevacked out.

It would be a long day for the men of Naresuan, especially the wounded. There was no food, water or medicine. Phot refused to become dispirited, enduring his pain to keep up his men's morale. But his wounds sapped his strength. As the 29th drew to a close and darkness crept in, Phot fell silent. With his last words, he asked his men to take his body back to his father and mother. At 1910 on 29 June 1976, Phot died on the Khao Khor battlefield.

Darkness and death surrounded the tiger scouts as they buried Phot and their other dead. Next day, the 30th, *Somdej* and Mengrai crossed the Kaek River, linking up with Naresuan. Together, the units moved on to relieve *Khun Suk*.

On 1 July 1976, *Somdej* cleared the CTs from the immediate area and evacuated more wounded. *Khun Suk* had been relieved. It had been a very hard fight, but the troops had endured despite thirst, hunger, fatigue and pain. It could not have been otherwise: Once in contact with the CTs, they maintained it. The link-up at the Kaek was carried out despite heavy CT resistance, and other units were pressing in on the CTs throughout the Khao Khor area.

For the security forces, losses were 21 KIA and 54 WIA during fighting from 14 June to 1 July 1976. CT casualties were approximately 150 KIA and many wounded. The missing pilot was never found, though the wreck of the F-5 was.

What was the final significance of the Khao Khor battle? It broke the communist hold over the area. Thailand would not allow the communists to have their way, despite the leftists. The courage and determination displayed by the troops lifted the morale of the people. Shortly afterward, on 6 October



Thai soldier searches CT hut with machete and M16. Chicken basket can be seen lying in corner. Photo: Bangkok Daily News

1976, the political climax was reached in Bangkok.

Clashes between the left-wing students and police erupted at Thammasart University. A new government took over backed by the military. Stability was returning to Bangkok, lending new momentum to the fight against the communists. But that would be in the months to come.

On 5 July 1976, units that took part in Ruam Jai 10 returned to Lomsak Air Base. Weary men welcomed the food and rest that CPM 1617 provided them. Back in the operational area, there would still be contacts, as security forces kept up efforts to clear out the enemy — but they had broken the CTs.

On 6 July 1976, the people showed their appreciation. At Lomsak, the troops received garlands and food from local people and blessings from monks. For the men who had fought in Khao Khor, be they hill-tribe volunteers or Pawai paratroopers, it was moving to be appreciated.

The men of the ordnance company also remembered Phot. They held a ceremony in front of 3rd Combat Support Command HQ, observing one minute of silence in his memory.

All that could be returned of Phot's body was his little finger. With it, his family and friends held a cremation service. His body would lie 800 kilometers from home: on the battlefield. After his death, Phot was promoted to captain in recognition of his conduct.

What Phot Ratanai did is not very different from what others had done before and what others will do after him. There are many like Phot still fighting. There are also others like him who have been seriously injured or killed, having sacrificed the greatest thing of all: their lives.

Phot's story is not just one of sacrifice for the kingdom of Thailand, but also of the sacrifice of men for other men. His example is that of a unit leader who, though seriously wounded, refused a medevac until all his wounded men were out. By doing so, he realized that he would die — that he would not see the next medevac chopper. He bled to death on the LZ.

When people say mockingly, "Only the traffic jams of Bangkok will stop the Vietnamese," remember Phot and the others. Keep them in mind — whether they are dead and live only in memory, whether they are disabled, injured in the hospitals or just trying to carry on with life. Whether they sit in ambush in the Chiengrai cold, patrol the Watana Gap or stand sentry at night in a village. Remember them. Of such men the kingdom of fighters is made.



IDI AMIN UPDATE

Fireside Chat With Big Daddy

by William M. Brooks



IDi Amin Dada, ex-dictator of Uganda and noted war criminal, is living comfortably in exile, an honored guest of the Saudi Arabian government. Furnished with a small pension and two automobiles, the ex-butcher of Kampala has been seen driving along the main streets of Jidda, his new Cadillac packed with his offspring.

In an interview which appeared in the 13 March 1981 issue of "Paris Match," Amin declared to Swedish journalist Stefan Heinersson, "I'm going to try to reconquer my country. Ugandans were happier under my regime." The ex-King-For-Life admitted he was poor and living modestly in an unpretentious home, "solely at the grace of King Khalid." He acknowledged that he fixes all the meals, and does the laundry and ironing for his 23 children who live with him. During the afternoon he studies Arabic and the history of Islam. In the evening he occupies his time by reading the history of England during the Second World War, and watching cowboy movies.

"History always remembers strong men," he reflected, "Big Daddy and Adolf Hitler. You can't have 36 sons

unless you're a strong man." Commenting on his eight-year reign as chief of state, he stated flatly, "I never killed anyone. I never gave orders to kill anyone. That was all invented to give me a bad reputation. And who invented this? The Jews! They hate me because I'm a Muslim. They detest me because I support the Palestinians. The Jews control all the news media. During my reign there were no political prisoners in Uganda. Now there are approximately 20,000 Muslims in prison there. There are thousands of political refugees in the neighboring countries: in the Sudan, in Kenya and in Zaire.

"If they try to escape and are caught, they are immediately tortured. They have even started crucifying political prisoners with spikes! Since I left Uganda, human rights have been nonexistent."

Commenting on why he lost the 1979 war with Tanzania, the ex-dictator ruminated, "Sweden sent mercenaries against me. Don't say that is impossible. I have the proof. I have the passports of all those Swedish mercenaries. With the following of the masses I will liberate Uganda once again. Everyone is behind

me. I have 13,000 partisans; if we had the arms we could defeat Obote [Uganda's first prime minister and the driving force behind Amin's ouster] in one week."

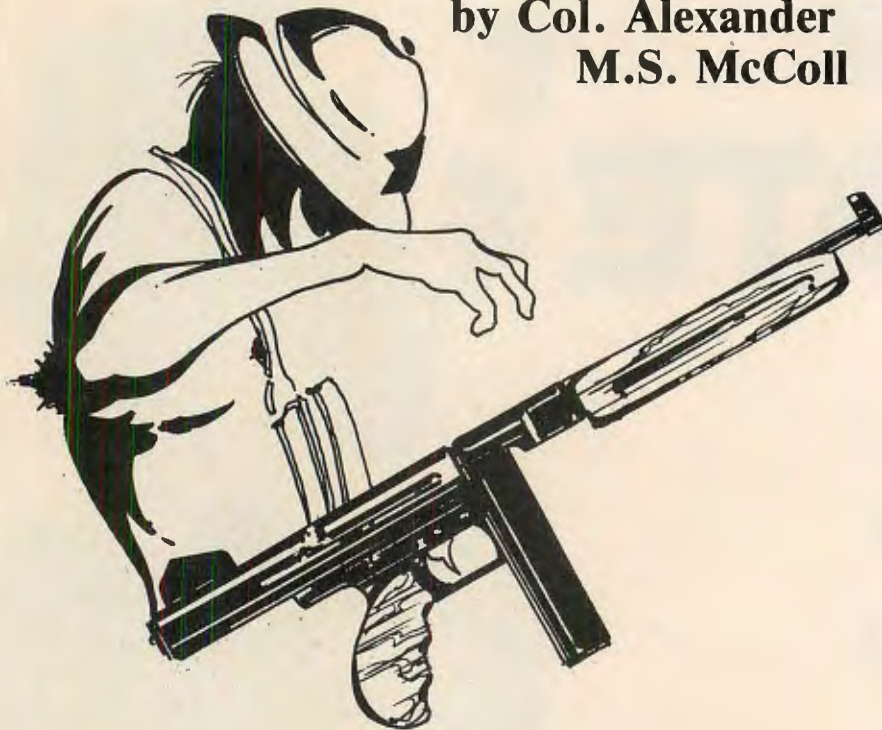
When questioned about the invasion date, Big Daddy replied, "It won't be long before I give the order to my soldiers. Give me your address and I'll give you a telephone call three weeks in advance so you can cover the operation. When Uganda is liberated, I will nominate myself as chief of state. We will have a democratic country. I will not occupy myself with military questions. But the country has need of a strong leader — a Big Daddy capable of giving orders and flexing his muscles — who is a physically strong leader and very intelligent. Like all great men, I'm writing a book — a book that will be studied and consulted by all the kings and presidents of the world; the title will be 'Big Daddy's Note Book'."

I can hardly wait.



TOMMY GUN IN 'NAM

by Col. Alexander
M.S. McColl



LET me tell you my war story about the awe-inspiring firepower one can get from a Thompson submachine gun, even though it happened about 20 years after this weapon had been declared obsolete and dropped from the U.S. Army's inventory.

In July, 1967, as a very freshly promoted major, I took over as Senior U.S. Adviser in Dong Xuan District, Phu Yen Province, South Vietnam. The District Headquarters was inside a compact, rather massively fortified compound on a low knob surrounded by the village of La Hai.

Exactly one kilometer west lay a much higher hill, the southeast corner of a tangled knot of hilly country extending north and west into real "Marlboro Country." This big hill was very much the "dominant terrain feature" in the sense that an enemy force in control of the hill could make life within the district compound unpleasantly exciting. So the district chief, a Capt. Nguyen Van Nam, who knew his soldiering, fortified the place and garrisoned it with a Regional Force company, less one platoon. This amounted to about 60 men with two Browning light machine guns, one 60mm mortar, perhaps six Browning automatic rifles and assorted individual weapons, chiefly M2 carbines.

About a week before I got there, the VC attacked the hill, ran off the Regional Force company on top, killed several people, shot up the district compound and generally made a nuisance of themselves. The defeated troops were pulled out for retraining and the 310th RF Company put in.

Well, about a week after I got there, on the night of 14 July 1967, it happened (battles of this type usually started shortly after midnight and lasted, more or less, until daybreak). The 85th VC Provincial Force Battalion made a fairly serious effort at a repeat performance at the big hill. In the light of hindsight, it was a somewhat unremarkable action, but this was my first real battle, so it made something of an impression on me.

The 310th stood its ground, the district chief fired his mortars to good effect and, on the American side, we had some very good support from the Spooky (the venerable C-47 transport with three 7.62mm electrically powered Gatling guns firing out of the left side, also flares; the sovereign remedy for taking the steam off people under pressure at night — provided there isn't an overcast) and from a battery of eight-inch howitzers several miles down the road. At the time I had barely met the battery commander, but his

unit's ponderous cannon definitely fired to good effect. It doesn't take very many of those 200-pound shells to do the trick.

The "morning after," the district chief and I went up the hill to count bodies, inventory captured weapons and generally conduct the "after-action actions." Two M1A1 Thompson guns were among the captured items — typical VC specimens: shoulder stocks missing, wooden parts really rather awful looking, outside metal not too good, but the bores and inner metal parts very respectable. After due palaver, these were declared to be my part of the loot, along with a goodly collection of magazines for them.

At this point I had one of my relatively few really bright ideas. I decided to give the eight-inch-battery commander one of these Thompson guns in recognition of his assistance during the night's action, and in due course this was done.

The battery commander, by his own confession an "Italian gangster from California" named Giacconi, was delighted. By this time the Chicago violin had long since been out of the inventory and thus an exotic, hence prestigious item, and since commanders of heavy artillery batteries don't have much opportunity to have to walk any great distance with it (it's beastly heavy, and the ammunition is worse), the M1A1 Thompson is really an excellent weapon.

This was the beginning of a very satisfactory alliance. In theory his "priority of fire" was in support of the Korean 26th Regiment (the principal Free World force in the northern part of Phu Yen Province) but, as it worked out, I had an eight-inch battery in direct support of myself and whatever the district chief and I might be hatching.

Several times thereafter, especially on cloudy nights when we couldn't use the Spooky, a few rounds of eight-inch at the right time and place made all the difference. Giacconi even kept a radio on my frequency, and shortly after the onset of what we used to call a "La Hai all-nighter," I would hear his cheery voice:

"Dingbat Six, this is Redleg Six. I hear you have contact and may I help you?"

Very, very comforting.

I never fired that particular Thompson gun. I suppose Giacconi may have used it to destroy a few sandbags or empty ammunition cans, but I doubt if he killed any dinks with it. Nevertheless, it had more than a little to do with bringing awesome firepower and death and destruction onto the heads of the enemies of the Republic.



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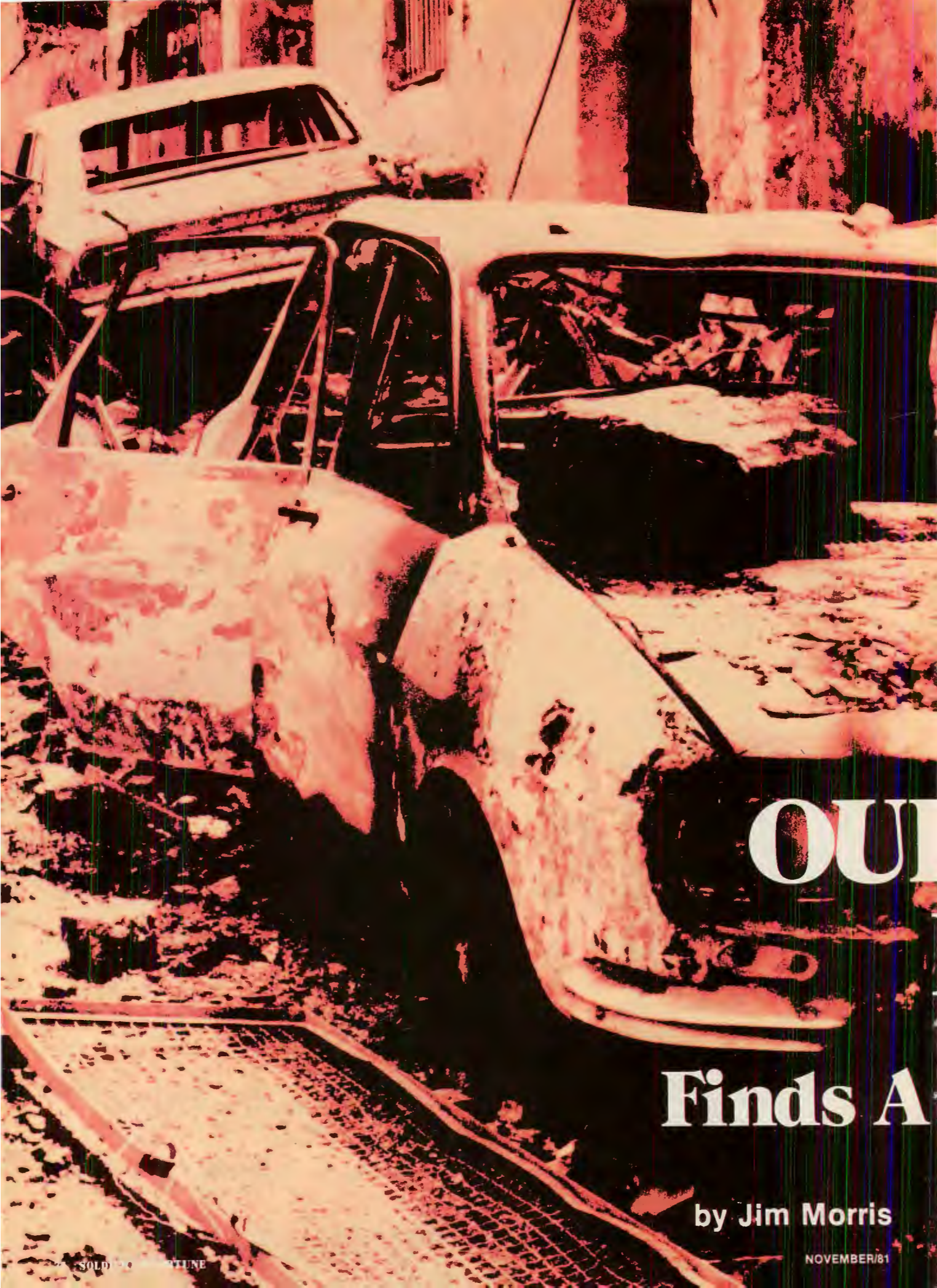
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OUT

Finds A

by Jim Morris

NOVEMBER/81



ARMAN IN BEIRUT

Humphrey

Bogart War

NOVEMBER/81

I sort of expected my Lebanese contact on Cyprus to be like Sidney Greenstreet, or Peter Lorre in a panama hat. What I got was a slender, clean-cut, collegiate-looking kid in a new Corvette, who grabbed my hand, shook it, and said, "Hi! My name's Masoud," in perfectly accented American English.

Masoud gunned the 'Vette through the narrow, twisting streets of Limassol. People, small cars and motorcyclists flew from our path and flowed back around the 'Vette like the wake of a ski boat. We pulled up in front of a pleasant-looking restaurant with a balcony overlooking the city.

We ate seafood on the verandah. Over a plate of shrimp, a salad and a bottle of excellent wine, Masoud told me his story. He had been a junior, majoring in electrical engineering at Oklahoma State, when the war with the Syrians got hot in '78.

He returned to Lebanon to find himself in charge of a squad of what the papers call the Christian Phalangist Militia: "One night one of my boys woke me up; I looked out through a chink in the wall and saw about 6,000 heads. So I called the boys with the mortars and had them fire right on us. We were in very strong houses, and they were in the open, so that drove them away."

We swapped war stories for a while, until he finally said, "You know, the things they do to our people, after a while they drive you crazy. So once, when we captured a Syrian, I tied him to the back of my jeep and drove him all over town, on cobblestones, down alleys. When I got through there was no more left of him than this." He held up a plate of shrimp shells and sauce.

"It gives me the creeps to think about it now," he said. "It scares me to think I could ever have been like that. When I go home I ask the boys not even to tell me their stories. They are fanatics."

That night I got the shakes. I thought back on my briefing from Jim Graves, the managing editor at SOF. "Look, Jim," I had demanded, "every combat situation is different. I like to know what I can do and not do, where I can go and not go. And most important, who are the good guys and the bad guys?"

Graves looked up from his desk and shot me an evil grin. "Well, Jimbo," he said, "that's what we're sending you over there to find out."

Maybe I shouldn't write about fear; maybe I should play it stoic and close to the chest, but I think it needs to be talked about. Everybody goes through it. This fear is as much a necessary part of preparation for combat as is cleaning your weapon.

I wasn't mad at anybody in Lebanon. So the deal I made with myself was that I would take it a step at a time, and reserve the right to back off anywhere

along the line. I would not, for instance, go into combat against a well-armed, well-trained, determined enemy with a bunch of clowns.

That was the intellectual part. Physically I got alternating chills in the gut and an enervating lethargy that made me not want to leave my nice warm bed. What was needed now was for my body to accustom itself to the fact that the decision had been made. Once that had been done, the transformation began, a transformation as complete as man into werewolf. I am convinced it is an actual biochemical change, a sustained, low-level release of adrenalin that keeps you alert and ready for combat.

All the tensions I had accumulated since Cambodia disappeared. A lower-back pain that had plagued me for three years vanished instantly.

It was an old sweet feeling I had missed, and the closer I got to combat the sweeter it would be. It's that feeling that suckers you in.

The next day Masoud arranged for my passage to Jounieh, a Christian-controlled port, 20 miles south of Beirut. Boat travel was necessary because I had no visa, and because the airport was in West Beirut, under the control of the enemy.

Once we were underway I ordered a beer at the bar. One of the other passengers, a chubby Lebanese in one of those shiny shirts (the kind favored by Vegas dealers and low-level mafiosi), approached me in true Peter Lorre style, and identified himself as an agent of ... Christ! I didn't even know what these people called themselves.

I had been told they were trying to shake the "Phalangist" tag. The word "phalange" comes from phalanx, which is an ancient Greek military formation. So the Christian Phalangist parties were political organizations formed for the express purpose of organizing a militia to defend these people's homes, shops and towns, when the central government was too weak and indecisive to do so. Unfortunately, the name "falange" is also associated with Franco's fascist party in Spain, not a good tag from a public-relations standpoint.

At any rate, I was sitting in the bar, sipping a Heineken and chatting with the ship's heavily muscled West Indian steward, when this sharp-nosed bureaucrat, sweating heavily, his belly jiggling against a shirt designed for a man with no waist at all, approached with my passport in his hand. "You have no visa!" he announced.

I nodded. "True. There is a man in Jounieh who is supposed to pick me up."

"His name!"

I gave him the name.

Just saying the name had an effect similar to racking back the bolt on an automatic weapon. The whole tone of



the conversation changed. "Well, if you know Joe, then you won't have any trouble."

I grinned. I wanted to see if I could make him sweat again. "Oh, I don't know him. My Cyprus contact is supposed to have called him that I was coming."

The beads of sweat popped right back out on his brow. "I will radio ahead and see if it is okay. You may have to go back to Cyprus."

I shrugged. "I get paid the same, either way." Not true. SOF Publisher Robert K. Brown would use me for a target on the grenade range if I went this far and didn't get a story. But I wasn't too worried; a high-handed air and a few names work wonders in these ceiling-fan countries. That's how I thought of Lebanon then: Vietnam with sand.

The only ocean-going vessels I had ever been on before were submarines. So that night I borrowed a blanket and slept on a foam pad on the flying bridge, under the stars. At night, on the sea, the stars are as bright as they are on the desert. I finally fell asleep with my glasses still on.

The next morning we were scheduled to arrive in Jounieh at 8:30, so I bounded down the ladder at first light, eager for coffee and breakfast.

The revolutionary bureaucrat came up to me at the bar, which also served as a lunch counter. "They didn't know you were coming, and they can't find Joe." Not good news, but I still wasn't worried. A couple of phone calls should fix it. I gave him some numbers from my notebook.

When we had eaten breakfast I went to the bow to watch slick blue water run under the boat, and a gray line of mountains appear on the horizon. The first Lebanese boat I saw in the water was an ancient fishing sailboat that looked like the *Flying Dutchman*, and which reinforced all my prejudices. But the second was a low, sleek outboard, pulling a skier. Oh, lord, I thought. They told me this was going to be different, but this is different from the different I had in mind.

The ten or eleven Lebanese men, who had joined us on the bow, began singing a folksong in a rhythmical Middle-Eastern chant, and one began beating his right fist into his left palm, muttering along with the music: "Syrians — kill fuckin' Syrians."

Shortly after that, a motor launch with two open rows of hardbacked wooden benches came out to our ship. Standing up in the boat was another overweight official in a slick shirt. He

Lebanese Forces poster reads: 13 April 1975 [date of battle of Tall Zaatar]: Dawn of Freedom.



Lebanese Forces' position on Beirut's "green line" — dividing line of Christian, Moslem sections of city.

carried a handy-talkie in one hand and wore a snub-nosed revolver on his right hip. As soon as the launch pulled alongside, two highly bronzed young men in standard-obscure Mediterranean bathing suits came aboard and began transferring our baggage.

But the thing which held my attention was the shore in front of us, crowded with swimmers, its little amusement park going full blast — complete with two gaily colored ferris wheels, a merry-go-round and some bumper cars.

The guy with the pistol on his hip and the bureaucrat from the boat engaged in animated conversation over my passport. A moment later my sweaty friend from the boat came back to where I sat and whispered in my ear, "As soon as we dock, take your bag and go across the street. Stand by the BMW."

The guys in the nasty swimsuits lobbed a couple of lines onto the dock as we coasted in. I grabbed my black B-4 bag which, with its 20 pounds of Second Chance armored vest, three sniper manuals and 16 copies of SOF, immediately threw my lower back out of

alignment. I lurched onto the Lebanese shore.

It's easy to forget, but there is a legal government in Lebanon. Its representative stood on the dock in rumpled khakis, with some sort of off-the-wall black epaulets on his shirt. My two accomplices, both of whom seemed much more in charge than the official representative, chatted with him while I heaved past as inconspicuously as a tall man with a red beard carrying a hundred-pound suitcase could.

I got across the street okay and stood admiring the palms and the handsome people on the beach. Rather than being characters from a backward Third-World country, these people seemed to be thoroughly into the 20th century, and enjoying it — but I didn't see a BMW anywhere.

Just as the official from the ship approached me, an old blue Plymouth sedan, with two red lights exactly like the ones on U.S. cop cars, drove up. "Get in that car," said my sweaty friend. I was not eager to do it.

Two young guys got out. They wore green fatigues and black berets and carried folding-stock AKs slung over their shoulders. One of them opened the trunk for my suitcase and camera bag. These lads were not part of any mariachi band. They handled their weapons with the familiarity with which most people handle their wallets.

One of them shot me a quizzical look. He didn't know whether he was picking up a prisoner or a VIP. I didn't either, but I nodded imperiously toward the door handle. He popped it open and I entered like the Queen Mother of England.

We drove through a nice seaport and resort town, with signs advertising seafood, scuba gear and discos in French, English and Arabic; the big movies were *L'Histoire d'O* and the *Wild Geese*. After a drive of about three miles, the car turned into a walled compound with a small guardhouse at the entrance. Inside were civilian villas, surrounded by spiny tropical vegetation and flowers. The guard at the gate, a listless lad of 17 or so, appeared to have his attention focused on something else, probably the



Lebanese Forces gunner fires captured RPG rocket on Syrian positions in Sannine Mountains.

top-40 radio. He'd be a snap to disarm and get past, if necessary. But then what?

We went inside the first building. I had been informed that this was a militia without rank but, rank or no rank, one sweep of the eyes sorted out the chief clerk, sergeant major and adjutant, and tabbed this as an MP outfit, since the adjutant, a small, bespectacled, finicky-looking man, had handcuffs on his belt.

I was pleased they were on his belt instead of my wrists. These people didn't know me, and had reason to be nervous. If they decided they didn't like me, or my magazine, I was in a world of hurt. Even if by some feat of *James Bondismo* I bashed and battered my way out of this compound, I'd be conspicuous, ignorant and illegal.

I sat for a long time behind a desk across from the adjutant, nervous and sleepy from my night on the bridge of the ship. Then the guard who had driven me here approached and loomed over me, concentrating, looking for words in English: "Wood yooo lighk zome coffee?"

After I'd drunk my coffee, I was ushered into another office to meet Joe. He welcomed me and called the Lebanese Forces G-5 to tell them I was coming. No guard this time, only the same driver who had driven me from the harbor, this time smiling and friendly. Before we reached our destination, my driver wrote his name and phone number in my notebook so we could go out and hell around a bit before I left Lebanon.

Back in Jounieh I had begun to wonder if the war in Lebanon were a joke or a comic-opera game. As we came into East Beirut all such misconceptions were dispelled. The closer we got to the center of town the greater the destruction: apartment houses with great shell-hole gouges and collapsed buildings. But the streets were filled with European and American cars, some of them also pockmarked with shrapnel holes, and the sidewalks were thronged with people, dressed no differently than those in Little Rock, Ark.

What really amazed me was that everywhere I looked there were construction cranes and new high-rise buildings going up. Some buildings under construction were already pockmarked with shell holes, and others bore patched holes — but they just went right on slapping them up.

I thought these people must be either the ballsiest in the world, or the smartest, or the craziest, or all of the above. Although I was to learn a great deal about Lebanon and the Lebanese in the coming weeks, nothing contradicted this initial observation.

My driver turned off a main boulevard and shot up a long hill, into an area of narrow two-lane streets,

fronted by high-rise apartments with balconies. The construction looked like Miami, Fla., but the doorways were barricaded with 55-gallon drums filled with dirt and topped with sandbags, and the street was full of young men wearing fatigues and carrying slung weapons — mostly AKs but a few M16s. Very few of these people wore caps with their fatigues, but a semi-military haircut was in style: short, but no crewcuts, no sidewalls. I saw no rank or unit insignia of any kind. They looked pretty sharp, but casual about it; no spitshines. Their uniforms fit well, and that lost, hangdog look often found in a Third World militia unit was totally absent.

We stopped in front of an apartment building, and my driver led me around the barricade and up the steps to a second-floor apartment. A plant hung just inside the door; across the room was a conversational grouping of plush furniture, containing a three-man French TV crew conversing animatedly with a tall, skinny, bearded Lebanese with a crewcut. He wore a genuine Vietnam-issue Special Forces tiger suit and a .45



in a spring-clip shoulder holster. He had on the last pair of WWII wraparound combat boots I have ever seen or expect to see.

All of these guys looked up when I came in, then went back to their conversation. I set my bag down and looked around.

In the dining room, several young men in fatigues sat at a large table poring over newspapers, magazines and photos. Working with them was a truly stunning girl, model-thin, with long red hair. She wore very tight faded jeans, sneakers and a white top. A good-looking lady, but she appeared tired, strained.

The guy in the tiger suit got up. He and my driver exchanged a few words in Lebanese. After a few seconds' conversation we shook hands. "My name is Samir," he said.

My driver said good-bye, reminded me to come see him in Jounieh, and left. Samir gestured toward the couch and we sat down across from the TV crew. By way of a conversation opener I asked him where he had gotten his tiger suit.



TOP: Lebanese Forces man defensive position in Christian area of city with captured Syrian armored car, British-made Alvis Saladin. Cannon is 76mm, rifles are M16s, and captured AKs. **ABOVE:** Beirut is modern city. Smoke comes from Syrian rockets crashing into Christian apartment complex. **RIGHT:** Lebanese Forces troopers, carrying M16s, hug buildings and move out fast during city street battle. **LOWER RIGHT:** Street scene in Achrafieh section of Beirut, near one of city's hospitals, shows results of past rocket attacks.

"A friend in your Special Forces got me six pairs," he said. "This is the last."

A kid that I took to be an American walked in. He walked with a slouching saunter and he wore Adidas sneakers and beat-up gray cords. He had the scraggly beard and long hair that I associate with college students. But over his alligator shirt he wore an old French-cammie bush jacket. Hey kid, I thought. That thing can get you killed here.

He went into the dining room and leaned on the table where the young people in fatigues were working and



a skateboard down the slope of the street and around the rubble. Around the corner another bunch of kids played soccer.

Our restaurant consisted of two rickety tables set outdoors behind a sandbagged wall. The kebab was done on an open grill made from a 55-gallon drum, halved lengthwise. But what a lunch: tabouleh, homuz, kebab, fresh fruit and Arak, a clear liquor which turns milky white when mixed with water. It tastes like licorice, but watch it.

"This country is sure different from what I expected."

He smiled. "You expected a desert."

I nodded.

While we ate I watched Sam closely, trying to take his measure. I liked what I saw. He was wary at first, but when he saw I had no preconceived notions, he warmed up quickly. Sam is highly intelligent, but I never saw a man slide into and out of a thousand-yard stare as quickly as he did. He had the spaced-out mystical-militant quality of an El Greco monk, trapped by the Inquisition. The feeling I had about Sam was that somehow he had been burned clean.

Lebanon's form of combat has its compensations, like this lunch, and the high incidence of truly lovely women, but when it got hot, it was very, very hot, and none of the parties was a signatory of the Geneva convention. Sam had lived through seven years of this stuff. I could only guess at his weariness.

Sam was of the warrior breed. Once when I saw him slide into that long-gone stare I asked him what he would have done if this war hadn't interrupted his life. He replied, "Oh, I'd have found one someplace."

I asked him about the atrocities Masoud had described on Cyprus. "Yes," he replied. "The Palestinians excel at that sort of thing. But our boys decided if those were the rules, we would play too. They backed away pretty fast."

Raised in Cairo, Sam had spent a year and a half in an Egyptian Commando unit as an 18- and 19-year-old kid. He was under no illusions about the general quality of Egyptian forces, but claimed his unit had been exceptional. The quality of their desert training, specifically, had been excellent.

He told one story about his Egyptian training. "There was a group of us sitting crosslegged around the instructor by the grenade range. He pulled the pin on a Russian grenade and threw it in my lap. 'Get rid of it,' he said. I knew it was either a dud, or had a long fuse, so I threw it back at him and said, 'Get rid of it yourself.' It had a long fuse, but it wasn't a dud. He left me alone after that."

He was quite frank about the fact that he had gone into G-5 work because his

began jiving with that exquisite young woman in French. She looked up and they smiled at each other.

From what sounded like two blocks over I heard a burst of AK fire, followed by another farther away, and then a muffled **crump . . . crump**.

I looked up, startled. "We are 200 meters from the front," Samir said. His accent was English public school, overlaid on the musical, rolling Lebanese lilt. Warily he lifted his wrist, pulled a green-and-black tennis sweatband away from the face of his watch, and said, "Would you like to go to lunch?"

If he wasn't worried about being 200 meters from the front, then I saw no reason why I should be: "Sure."

We got up and sauntered out of the apartment. "Do you like Lebanese food?"

I nodded.

Outside, a kid in jeans expertly steered

nerves were shot. "It's quite amusing, really," he said. "I get shot at twice as much as before, because I'm always taking journalists to where the action is. Before, I stayed with my unit, and it was only hot when it was hot."

As we talked, we found that we had read an amazing number of the same books. I asked if he had read *The Centurions* and *The Praetorians*, by Jean Larteguy, the two books which have been read by more Special Forces men than any others, except possibly FM31-21. He had not only read them, he had read all of Larteguy, and met him when he came to Lebanon.

My situation was very different at the end of the lunch than it had been at the beginning. I know my people when I find them. Somewhere in their hearts they all fly the flag with the coiled snake that says, "Don't Tread on Me!" For the first time since leaving the 5th Special Forces Group in Vietnam, I felt completely at home with my environment, at ease and happy. These were my kind of folks.

Walking back across the street to the press bureau, we passed the American college kid we had seen earlier, unloading the French TV crew from a white VW bug, into which they and their equipment had been jammed. The kid had an AK slung over his shoulder. "Hmmmmm," I thought. "Things are not always what they appear."

When we got back upstairs and flopped down on the couch, Sam said, "Well, what can we do for you?"

"I've got a bulletproof vest and a sniper manual to deliver to a guy named Rocky in a place called Sodeco, and another couple of manuals for a guy named Tony in Hadath. Let's get rid of the bloody vest first. Then we'll play it by ear."

He went to check with Lebanese Forces command to see if it was okay if I went to Sodeco, wherever that was. I had visions of a tiny village near Beirut that we would have to tiptoe over the mountains at night to get to. I still had a firmly fixed idea of Vietnam in the desert, with these guys playing a role sort of like the Hoa Hao. I unzipped my bag and dragged out the vest.

The college boy with the AK and the French TV crew came clattering up the stairs.

Sam came back and said, "Okay, you're supposed to spend the night in Sodeco; Rick will take you."

"Who's Rick?"

He indicated the college boy.

"Who's that gorgeous French creature?"

"That's Christine. She's Rick's friend. May I see the vest?"

I handed it to him. Rick left the Frenchmen, who sat down with their beers, and came to examine the vest. He was distant and none too cordial. He looked tired. He and Sam spoke to each



Two men from Ain el Rammaneh section of Beirut take outdoor-cafe coffee break. Note sandbag placement in background.

other in bursts of rapid-fire French, too fast and complicated for me to follow. But after they spoke he was open and friendly.

The vest had two tiers of alloy plates in front and back that slid into OD-nylon pockets. Second Chance makes heavier ones, with more armor, to cover the crotch, but that was a lot more weight than I'd wanted to carry. In any case, the heavier vests would not have covered the area under the arms. It had been made primarily for police work, just as the Army and Marine flak vests are made for indirect-fire weapons. Sam and Rick wanted something that would cover you both ways.

My god, I thought where is this place I'm going?

"You ready?" Rick inquired.

I looked around the apartment, considering that once again I had gotten myself into a situation where I was racing off to get shot at with people I didn't know. "Just like that, huh?"

"Unless you've got something else to do here."

I made a transatlantic call to SOF, to tell Graves I was there, was okay, and was going out.

"What's it like?" he asked.

"So far it's been a Humphrey Bogart movie."

"Well, don't get yourself killed just to get a story."

"I won't." I hung up the phone.

"Okay," I muttered. "Let's go." I picked up my camera bag.

"Don't take that!" Rick commanded.

"That's just my camera bag."

"I know, but our people cross over into West Beirut all the time; some of us work over there. We have relatives over there. We can't afford to have our faces shown. We can't let our positions be revealed either."

Great, I thought. No photos. Brown's going to love that. Rick was telling me rule number one for this war (and once more I was thinking when I should have been listening, an omission I was to regret deeply later). Just as rule number one for Vietnam had been never set a pattern, rule number one for Lebanon was never let them know who you, personally, are. Because if you do they will definitely send someone to do a number on you. But all I could think about was the bloody photos — in the end, they gave me more photos than I could ever use.

We went back downstairs and got in Rick's beat-up old VW bug. He eased it past the quiet block of apartments and the pinball arcade going full blast at the end of the block. But the instant we hit a major traffic artery, two blocks down, he floored it and we roared through empty, shattered streets. We blasted through a red light, entering a major intersection at about 85 kph. "Stop at that light and you'll draw mortar fire almost every time," he muttered, and gave me a piratical grin, taking quick glances down the six intersecting streets

to see if he might be run over by an oncoming tank.

He twisted down three or four more streets, slewed sideways into the entrance of a parking garage, and parked correctly between two white lines.

"Is that a stock VW engine in there?" I asked, when I had caught my breath.

Rick grinned wryly as he opened the car door. "Not exactly," he said. "Okay, this is it."

No midnight infiltration over the mountains. Sodeco was a section of downtown Beirut, like Flatbush is a section of downtown Brooklyn.

A handsome, well-built young man, with curly brown hair and an engaging smile, walked toward us. He wore a pair of fatigue pants and an OD T-shirt. He looked to be about 20 or 21, and carried himself with an unselfconscious air of command.

"This is Rocky, the Sodeco commander," Rick said. We shook hands. Rocky and Rick grinned at each other. It was obvious they liked each other a lot.

"See you in the morning," Rick said. He jumped in the bug and screeched backward up the ramp, through a blue haze of exhaust; he went so fast that if I'd blinked I'd have missed it. A squeal came from upstairs as he speedshifted into low and roared off down the street.

Rocky took me on a walking tour of his section of town. A couple of his boys went along with us. One of them had a pistol on his hip, but nobody carried a rifle. It was all concrete, close in, and shot straight up for many stories. Holes, pockmarks and rubble were everywhere. We walked easily until we approached a little open area in front of a church. "Stay on the right here," Rocky said. "On the left side of the street a sniper can hit you."

I remembered Nha Trang during Tet, downtown, where a foot either way made the difference between complete exposure and absolute safety.

I think Rocky wanted mostly to show me the church. It was shot all to hell. But I was interested in why they weren't armed, and were unconcerned, if this was such a hot area.

"Venter told me you had a hell of a fight when he was here," I said.

"Yeah," Rocky replied. "Up on the roofs. His guide got on the elevator on the 12th floor. Unfortunately the elevator was in the basement. It shook Al up pretty badly."

On the roofs, there were no ground assaults, but nowhere to hide, except for behind a few sandbags.

We went on back downstairs to the parking garage. "You want a beer?" Rocky asked. This was a front-line position and I had to settle for a Lowenbrau, but it was ice-cold.

There were also a couple of nice-looking girls downstairs, one in heels and a purple pair of those ugly, baggy



TOP: Shrapnel through windshield stopped this car, but most city vehicles keep traveling with lesser battle mementoes — note bullet holes in car body. **ABOVE:** Sodeco area of Beirut shows Syrian "air-conditioning."

pants which are in fashion now. She held her cigarette at an affected angle, and had a toy poodle on a leash. I think if the poodle had been clipped I'd have dropped the entire project right there. The other girl was in jeans and a T-shirt. The one with the poodle looked French; the other was dark enough to be Lebanese.

From the way they were jiving the young men, I began to understand that I had come to a place where being a first-rate resistance fighter was the best way to get girls. I smiled. I had finally come to a place where people had their priorities straight.

Just at that point, Rick came

screaming back down the ramp in his bug and screeched to a stop beside me. "I came to pick you up. Headquarters wants you back at G-5." He hadn't shut off his engine and the garage was filling up with noxious fumes. I didn't like this. I was all jazzed up for a fire fight, and ... ah, well, no point in arguing. Rick wasn't a decision maker.

"Maybe next time," I said to Rocky, and got in the VW.

We backed up the ramp and screamed once more through the blasted streets. "Why did they pull me out?" I asked.

"I don't know," he said. "I'll try to find out when we get back."

"Are you Lebanese? When I first saw you I thought you were an American college student."

He laughed. "I'm almost 30. I was born here, but my father is American. I went to college in the States. I have a B.A. and an M.A. in political science from Berkeley.

"Berkeley?" I grinned.

"Yeah, I used to have hair halfway down my back and a ring in my ear, to blend in, you know. But I always spent my summers training and fighting here. There was only one guy I was really tight with at Berkeley, and he was a Marine colonel back for an advanced degree."

We pulled in at the G-5 apartment house, skipped around the sandbags and went upstairs.

Sam looked up from the couch, where he sat chatting with a Swedish TV crew. "Hello," he said. "How was the trip?"

"Not very satisfactory," I grumbled. "Look, if I'm going to get a story for a combat magazine I gotta see some combat. I'm no good to anybody dead, but the more action I can see, and get

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“REBEL”

IN RHODESIA

Part 1: From Ballads to Battlefields— The Making Of A Soldier of Fortune

by Michael “Reb” Peirce

I'd been trying to make it as a musician for 10 years — 10 long years of traveling all over the country, sometimes making money, sometimes starving. I'd written dozens of songs, chick singers had broken my heart, hollow promises of slick producers had disillusioned me. Between bands I'd laid bricks, cut grass, worked in restaurants, factories and hospitals, picked fruit and swept the streets, always moving on. To this day I can't look at a freeway exit without getting a funny feeling in the pit of my stomach.

Once I planned to be a professor of military history, but the idea got lost in the shuffle. College bored me, but I never forgot my first ambition: I kept a copy of Guderien's *Panzer Leader* in my guitar case.

Finally I went to Los Angeles. Things began to look up. In L.A., a man with initiative can get ahead quick. I began to hustle as I never had before. On weekends I worked as a security guard on a movie lot, and during the week as a bouncer at an amusement arcade in Hollywood. Most importantly, my music sounded good and the right people began to listen. Thanks to my partner and good friend Dan Kopfman, I recorded my own songs in a major studio. At long last I was headed toward a solid career.

This was what I'd been working for, but astonishingly, I walked away from it or, more precisely, I put the whole thing on ice.

As a songwriter, I dealt in emotion and experience. I thought I was missing a very important experience by not having been a soldier. Once I'd tried to enlist in the U.S. Army, only to have my vision of myself as a para-





ABOVE: Maj. Darrell Winkler behind twin .30-caliber Browning machine guns mounted on 4x4. **Photo:** Robert K. Brown **LEFT:** Members of armored unit practice with Uzi and FN. The 4x4 mounts twin .30-caliber Brownings.

trooper dashed when they rejected me for medical reasons. But now it was 1978 and I'd been following the struggle of a hard-pressed little country called Rhodesia, and apparently the Rhodesians weren't too selective about who joined *their* army.

Then I saw an article in *Soldier of Fortune* Magazine about the "Black Devils," the Rhodesian Armored Corps (see SOF, January '79, p. 38), and the magical word *panzergrenadier* flashed in my mind like a bloody great neon sign. I dashed off a letter to the Rhodesian army recruiter. I received a polite reply saying that since I had no previous military experience and was nearly 30 years old, my services would not be needed at this time, thank you very much.

Well, in the music business I'd heard "no" so many times, it sounded like "yes" to me, so I decided to go to Rhodesia anyway and hope for the

best. Like the man said, I was getting older, so I'd better squeeze in another adventure before I got too settled. I sold everything I owned, including my beloved bass guitar which I had affectionately named "Suzanne." Then it was time to break the news to my friends and family.

My partner knew me pretty well and was not surprised when I told him: "So you're going to Rhodesia to fight the commies, huh? Well, good luck, brother, the tapes will be waiting when you get back. By the way, where is Rhodesia?" Where indeed.

I phoned my brother and told him of my plan to go to war. He replied, "Christ, Michael, don't get involved in the war. With your luck the Japs will get you for sure." Patiently I explained we were no longer at war with the Japanese. Hardly mollified, brother Dan informed me that I was a "... asshole! And don't come crying to me when you get killed!" Rather than worry my parents, I manufactured a story for them about a job with an overseas security company. The fabrication worked for a while, until vanity overcame discretion and I sent them a newspaper photo of me and the boys

standing on a pile of dead terrors. Deception never was my strong point.

Then it was time to say, "Hello, Africa" and "Goodbye, America" and, with my heart in my throat, I climbed aboard that big jet plane.

I arrived in London and discovered, to my disgust, that my travel agent had feathers for brains. It looked like I'd need some feathers myself if I expected to get to Rhodesia with any money in my pocket — the airfare to Salisbury was nearly twice what I expected. Lack of finances had never stopped me before, so a bored-looking South African Airlines clerk became the ungrateful recipient of the entire Peirce fortune. Several hours later I was winging my weary way to darkest Africa.

Traveling to a war-torn country 10,000 miles from home didn't concern me. I was too busy chain-smoking cigarettes and spending my last few pennies on double whiskies. The ironic thought occurred to me that while I was preparing to risk my life in combat, I had been reduced to a state of abject terror simply by boarding an airplane. I detest flying and I was afraid even to go to sleep for fear a

It's not all fun and games.

wing might fall off while I wasn't looking.

To my amazement, the plane landed safely in Salisbury and I hesitantly approached a uniformed customs official. My desire to fight wavered momentarily when I noticed his prosthetic arm.

"All the way from America, are we? Don't get too many visitors from America these days. Welcome to Rhodesia, sir. And how much currency do you have on you, sir?" What a question!

"Not quite a thousand dollars," I replied with a straight face.

"Could I see it, please?"

I boldly produced my entire bankroll which consisted of one pound 50 pence. Fortunately, the plane had already departed, because they wanted to deport me right then and there. Then I started talking for my life. I showed the customs man my rejection letter from the army and explained that, to an American, rejection actually meant acceptance and couldn't he just phone the army recruiter and see if they'd take me.

Mumbling "Bloody Yanks" under his breath, he proceeded to make the call, and 15 minutes later I was face to face with a stern-looking recruiter and a cocky-looking officer in camouflage uniform who turned out to be Maj. Darrell Winkler of the Rhodesian Armored Car Regiment.

For once in my life I was speechless. The recruiter, Maj. Johnson, informed me that I was an idiot, but if Maj. Winkler would have me I was in. The American major gave me five minutes to convince him I was worth having and I must have said something right, because a few minutes later I was motoring toward Salisbury in an army staff car.

We pulled into Blakiston-Houston Barracks, part of the KG VI complex, and the home of the armored-car regiment. The major told me it would take a couple of days to get me processed, but I was to consider myself in the army and would spend the night in bar-



ABOVE: Ferret armored scout car. RIGHT: Troop training at RLI assault course. Photos: John Crawford

racks. Then he pulled out his wallet and said, "You'll probably want to have a few beers tonight at the enlisted men's club." He handed me 10 dollars, remarking, "I'll expect it back when you get paid. Now let's get you organized."

It was the beginning of a memorable relationship. Maj. Winkler looked after me that day and I never forgot it. He got me into the Rhodesian army and, 18 months later, he would get me out of it when we flew back to New York on the same plane.

Next I was shown around the depot by an eager-beaver lieutenant from Missouri named Randall Sumpter. I was very impressed with the Eland 90 armored cars and the unusual-looking, locally improvised personnel carriers. One vehicle in particular caught my eye: a 2½-ton Mercedes truck, bristling with radio antennas and sporting a 50-caliber Browning machine gun. "That's for me," I told the lieutenant, but he shook his head and told me that was the major's personal vehicle and that he used only the most experienced people as his crew. "We'll see," I thought.

I soon learned it wasn't all fun and games when I was delivered into the tender mercies of a sergeant who let me know straightaway that he felt nothing but contempt for recruits in general and Americans in particular. Then off to the quartermaster store where I was issued a bewildering array of uniforms that didn't fit and equipment that didn't work by a storeman who kept giving me pitying



looks, as if I had entered prison voluntarily.

At the end of the working day I was shown where I'd be sleeping and eating and made the acquaintance of two Englishmen who had joined the regiment that same day. Both had been given the rank of full corporal on the basis of their previous experience. They took me under their wings and helped me figure out minor details like how to assemble my webbing and tailor my uniform. One of these guys later revealed himself to be useless baggage, but Allen Jones was a soldier's soldier and helped me over many of the pitfalls that await a green recruit. We became fast friends and developed that special rapport that means so much and is so difficult to find.

After sorting out our kit, it was off to the Corporals'-and-Privates' Mess for a meal and a beer. I was astounded by the excellent quality of the food



ABOVE: Eland light armored car crossing difficult terrain. (Eland is South African-manufactured copy of French Panhard AML.) Photo: John Crawford **LEFT:** Author, taken upon completion of training.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

This first part of a three-part article is Michael "Rebel" Peirce's second contribution to the pages of SOF (see "Abandoned," SOF, November '81, p. 87). At age 29, he temporarily left behind a promising career as a musician to become a soldier in Rhodesia, achieving the rank of acting sergeant before his departure two years later.

Peirce is back to writing songs now — and stories — and is currently employed as a security agent. He is also a student of military history.

Peirce would like to thank his buddies John Ward, Dave Hughes and Jim Walker for some of the photos accompanying his three-part article, and has requested that certain individuals' eyes be blacked out in the pictures, as they are still involved in sensitive work.

—C.E.D. Kite

and the relaxed, club-like atmosphere of the mess. Here I met some of the people who would become faithful comrades for the duration of the war: Marty from England, a pookie (mine-detection vehicle) driver; Taffy from Wales, Assault Pioneers; Dave, the airborne medic from Australia; and Brian, the quiet, friendly Rhodesian signalman. People from all arms of the service congregated at the Corporals' Club, and my military education began as I listened wide-eyed to the stories told in that pub. Everybody seemed to have some advice for me and soon I had a long list of handy items for when I went for basic training.

The subsequent weeks were a dizzying blur as my sloppy civilian attitudes vanished and I began to adjust to the demanding military life. In contrast to its U.S.-Army counterpart, the Rhodesian army medical officer passed me with flying colors.

"Mr. Peirce, your left eye appears to be nearly useless but, after all, we use our right eye for shooting, don't we?" Yes, "we" do.

I was formally inducted and swore the special oath required of foreign

volunteers, requiring only that I agree to obey the orders of my superiors and serve the three years specified in my contract.

Soon I was performing time-honored tasks like learning to salute and picking up cigarette butts. I tried to teach my American body the contortions of British army drill. "Straighten up that body, man, you look like a bloody bucket of shit!" Every spare moment I had, it was off to the armory to master the intricacies of the FN rifle, Uzi submachine gun and 9mm pistol. I was four days away from being posted to RLI for basic training when I heard an exciting rumor. The regiment was going operational.

Events at the depot verified the rumor. Ammunition was being issued, medical packs filled, radio batteries and rations distributed. Naturally I wanted to go; naturally I was told "no way." I begged everybody from the rank of lance corporal up to squeeze me in, but nobody wanted to take the responsibility. I swore to one particularly adamant sergeant that I would be an asset to his stick:

"You don't even know how to strip an FN, Yank."

"Yes I do, Sergeant, 30 seconds flat."

"Excellent, get to work cleaning all these."

So there I was, everybody going to war and I was stuck in the depot cleaning every rifle in the armory.

A taste of action in Winkler's stick.

At the last minute I heard a mad staff sergeant named Mike Kemish bellowing, "I'm short a man! I'm short a man, for Christ's sake! Where the hell are those rookies?" I waited expectantly until he poked his head in the door and said, "You! Whatever your name is. Can you shoot?"

Deciding upon a change of tactics, I replied, "Hell, no, Staff, never handled a rifle in my life."

"Perfect! Draw an FN and some grenades; you're going with me. And get somebody to show you how to use the damn thing."

I couldn't have been happier with the arrangement. Kemish was a former SAS man who now drove for Maj. Winkler, which meant I'd be in the major's stick.

We fell in next morning at 0300 in full battle gear, which was pretty uncomfortable for me because, being green, I was carrying the regulation kit and could hardly walk. Still, I was predictably excited at the prospect of my first action. I was also a little shocked by the circumstances: In the final briefing we found out that our objective was a group of 60 terrorists in the Chinamora Reserve near Dombashawa, only 40 kilometers from Salisbury. Remind me to lock the windows tonight, Mother; the hard cases are on the edge of town. (Later I discovered that they were actually in the city itself — it wasn't just the security forces who took their R&R in "Berg.")

We mounted up and moved out toward the objective. As the sun came up we took a break, and I got a good look at the whole column. It was beautiful: four Elands, two Ferrets, four personnel carriers, the major's two-five and nearly a hundred of the most bloodthirsty-looking men I'd even seen.

My first big fright came when I fell off the truck and landed on my kidney pouch, which was full of white-phosphorus grenades. I counted off four anxious seconds, realized I was still alive, and sheepishly climbed back aboard the vehicle. Not only did I feel like an ass, but I was left with a per-

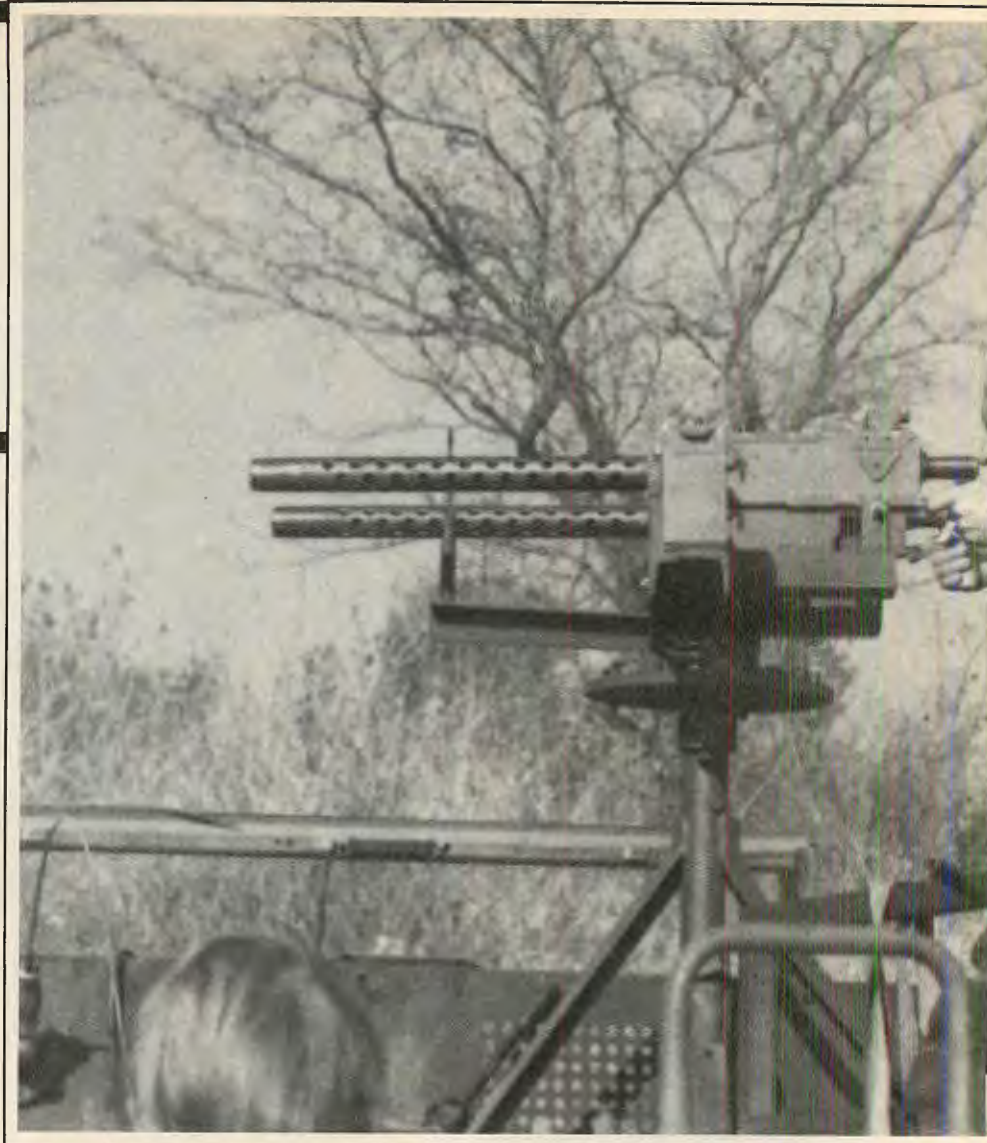
manent dislike for the highly volatile grenades; I never again carried those wicked items.

All of a sudden it was happening. We debarked and split into our sticks. The big guns started pounding the *gome!* (hill) across the way. **CRASH-BOOM!** I watched the 90mm rounds go in, followed by the 50s and the .30 Brownings. I knew that, in all probability, that stuff would be flying both ways shortly. I won't say I was scared, but L.A. seemed mighty good at that moment.

Two figures were coming toward us. Everybody took cover and the major raised his hand and yelled, "Take 'em!"

Deafened by the sudden noise, I watched my tracers burn their way to the target. Skirmish forward, down again. No return fire. We came abreast of our targets and I had to choke back an urge to vomit. The child had not been hit; the man had. High-powered rifles certainly make a mess out of a human being.

We kept moving, trudging another 20 clicks in pursuit of the enemy. I



ABOVE: Mercedes Benz two-five mounted with twin 7.62 Brownings, usually used by HQ D Squadron. **RIGHT:** Rhodesian-manufactured "Bullet" trails two 4x4s on bush patrol. Middle vehicle mounts Browning aircraft model .50-caliber machine gun adapted for ground mount. **LOWER RIGHT:** Ferret scout car.

wasn't very fit at that point and the pace told on me. We stopped for a "tenner" and I shared an orange with the major.

"Look, sir, I appreciate you letting me come along for this scene."

"Yeah, I figured you'd enjoy a taste of it before you went off to basic."

The rest of the day was unproductive but nerve-wracking. On a sweep line you just never know. For all the talk about the Rhodesian army's superior counter-insurgency tactics, it always boiled down to basics: Extend your line formation and go. I had an African rifleman on each side of me. Every time we stopped they literally disappeared into the bush. I knew if they could do it, the enemy could. I was one alert white boy.



At day's end, the vehicles met us and we headed for the depot. A follow-up action later revealed that our initial fire had taken out three armed terrorists. But, for me, it was more than a minor action with a trifling body count. In the back of my mind I knew I'd shot at and probably hit a civilian. It didn't go down easy. He'd been feeding terrors the night before, but he wouldn't be feeding them anymore. I could accept that. What made it hard was the child, alive only by virtue of our MAG gunner's poor marksmanship. OK, so that's what war is all about. Yes, war is unpleasant but what can you do? It's hard to make value judgments at 150 meters.

The night after my first action I earned some chump-change working behind the bar in the senior NCOs' Mess. There was nobody there from my regiment, but naturally I had to create a scene. With 20-odd beers clouding my judgment, I called for silence and proposed a toast to "... the finest regiment in the Rhodesian army, Armored Cars!"

"Who is that idiot? Get him out of here!"

The following Monday I was told to

report to the Admin. Officer, Lt. Virginia (my god, isn't she sweet) Grey. "Well, Peirce, you'll be leaving today for a bit of a crash course at RLI." Lt. Grey was a master of understatement.

Two nervous recruits from Armored Cars entered RLI Barracks at Cranbourne — the words, "Abandon all hope, ye who enter here," crossed my mind as I passed through the gate. My companion was an unlikely character named Dino McIntosh, a Jewish Sicilian Scotsman from South Africa. My nerves were not exactly calmed when two American recruits with shaved heads approached me with dire warnings concerning the brutality of the training and the hatred of the instructors for all things American.

Being somewhat older and considerably more street-wise than these two boy-scout types, I laughed them off and told them, "Shit in your hats, boys, there is no such thing as Americans here. We're all the same in this mob." Nevertheless, bold talk doth not a bold man make. The anti-American prejudice was mostly teenage fantasy, but the brutality of the training was in no way exaggerated.

McIntosh and I soon learned the lay of the land, each in his own way. While I was getting acquainted with the other recruits, McIntosh was busily laying the groundwork for a lucrative black-market business in rations and kit. Soon he was providing an essential service to men facing severe penalties for being short so much as a button; even the instructors paid him the occasional midnight visit in search of some needed item.

At RLI Barracks, stealing was considered a legitimate method of obtaining kit. My second night there, I put everyone on notice that I would not be party to such shenanigans. It was my habit to sleep with a knife under my pillow — "better safe than sorry" is a rule I've always lived by. Late one night I discovered someone creeping around my bed and grabbed him by the hair, putting the blade to his throat.

"Look, you, it's dark and I don't know who you are. I don't want to know. But the next time I find anybody anywhere near my kit, I'll cut first and ask questions later! You understand me?"

"Yes! Yes! Sorry! Just let me go, man."

In the morning everyone in the barrack room was aware of what had happened and I was never bothered again.

The training was tough and uncompromising. If you fell out on a run, you were kicked back into line. If you couldn't walk, you crawled. My first taste of it involved running 10 kilo-



Continued on page 81

COL. Napoleon Alvarado, commanding officer of the Fifth Brigade, briefing us at military headquarters in San Vicente City, capital of San Vicente Province, El Salvador, remarked with a mirthless smile: "So you want some action, eh? Well, where you're going, you will get plenty of that."

He wasn't kidding.

Where we were going was a village called Amitlan Abajo, a 20-minute LOACH (Hughes 500) helicopter ride north-northeast of San Vicente City in the middle of El Salvador. It had long been a communist guerrilla stronghold and the Salvadoran army now intended to correct that situation.

We were *Newsweek*/UPI freelancer John Hoagland, SOF contract interpreter Everett Jackson and myself, on assignment to El Salvador, which is in the throes of a Fidel Castro-backed communist insurgency in one of the most under-reported wars ever. What is reported is for the most part inaccurately described by liberal journalists who visit the capital of San Salvador for a day or two in order to get a dateline and then go back to the Eastern Seaboard newspapers and write their already preconceived stories.

The three of us crammed into the LOACH's baggage compartment and after contour-flying through rough mountain terrain, dropped off to join the rear elements of Alpha Co., First Bn., Fifth Brigade. That was nice, because the lead elements had been busily employed in taking Amitlan Abajo at a cost of one killed and three wounded. And the job, we soon learned, had yet to be finished.

The wounded. It is unpleasant to be a badly wounded soldier in this nasty little war, because the country has only 10 Huey D choppers for use as medevac slicks. Sometimes they pull double duty as gunships. In El Salvador a gunship is a Huey with an H60 machine gun mounted in either door.

Arriving at the *ville*, which is perched on the slope of *Cerro El Ingles* — English Mountain — I found A Co. troopers busily cleaning their H&K G-3 rifles, shiny with age, the blueing long since worn away, and plucking chickens — obviously communist chickens — for dinner.

Exactly one hour and 46 minutes after arrival, while Jackson was lighting a cigarette, Hoagland taking a leak and I changing film in my Nikon, A Co. came under a storm of guerrilla fire — FALs supplied by Castro and leftist Nicaragua (which of course denies doing so to continue qualifying for U.S. foreign-aid programs). The Cuban dictator also kindly furnishes advisers for guerrilla training cadres and welcomes guerrillas into Cuba for



Wounded soldier, Pvt. Ricardo, gets blood-plasma infusion. El Salvadoran trooper was shot through stomach during second day of heavy fighting against communist

SOF UNDISCOVERED IN EL SALVADOR

The Battle of

by Bo



guerrillas at village of Amitlan Abajo in San Vicente Province. Pvt. Ricardo survived, despite six-hour wait for medevac helicopter. Photo: Bob Poos

UNDER FIRE IN EL SALVADOR At Amitlan Abajo

by Bob Poos

intensive training. And they are well-trained.

I quickly learned that this is no comic-opera Latin American war, where everyone runs around shouting excitedly and firing his rifle into the air. This is serious business here. I have not been under such heavy, determined fire since Vietnam.

When the firing started, coming initially from the east, I was perched on a stone wall. Being familiar with the proper procedures in such a situation, I dropped to the wall's west side and, for want of anything better to do, continued to change the film.

That was fine for a while. But then firing burst from the west, as it did from the north and south. Surrounded.

However, the tough little Salvadoran soldiers very professionally established a tight perimeter and coolly — almost joyfully — returned fire. As many SOF readers will recall, things get noisy at times like these: the POP, POP, POPPETY-POP from the FALs about 75 meters away, the ensuing zing-WHANG-WHOP of incoming rounds, and the BLAM, BLAM, BLAM of A Company's G-3s responding.

Some of the FAL rounds began chipping away at my stone wall and the side of an ancient stone farmhouse which adjoined it. They were about 2½ feet above my prone body, which couldn't get any lower because of my jacket buttons.

After about 10 minutes of this, I figured I wasn't making any money here, so I low-crawled over to the perimeter and lay beside a soldier busily BLAM, BLAM, BLAMMING away with his G-3. He rolled over, in the process of dropping one magazine and jamming in another, grinned and said: "*Es muy bueno, si, señor?*" *Muy bueno* (very good) is not exactly the way I would have described the situation, but the soldier, who seemed to be enjoying himself hugely, recharged his piece and returned to work with a wide grin. I sincerely hoped this man wouldn't get killed, but if he did, I intended to pick up his rifle and help maintain the perimeter, which was stretched very thin indeed.

At that point, I saw something I almost couldn't believe, and wouldn't have had I not seen it. A soldier left one position and dashed to another for a better field of fire. His weapon: a Danish Madsen light machine gun. The gun belongs in a war museum somewhere, but it turned out to be the only LMG A Co. had, so it had to serve.

So now we had a BLAMMETY, BLAMMETY, BLAMMETY added to the G-3 BLAMs and the FAL POP, POP, POP, POPPETY-POPs. Very noisy now, and the exchange of fire seemed about equal. I learned later that this was not so. A Co. was outnumbered.

EL SALVADOR

The guerrillas, who had been firing just a trifle high, corrected their aim, and I found myself lying in a beaten zone. Now that is no way for a middle-aged war correspondent to get any older and return to write his story, for which he is getting paid. So I let discretion become the better part of valor and crawled hastily back to my wall and oozed over it, doing a low crawl for the farmhouse's front porch. That offered protection from three sides at least.

A soldier, blazing away with his G-3 from a doorway, stopped firing for a moment and beckoned me inside. I gladly obeyed. But after a while, enjoying the safety in that stone womb, I remembered that I had a job to do — and a camera full of film — so back outside I crawled, trying to get some pictures.

This fire fight had lasted about half an hour now and showed no signs of decreasing in intensity. I thought, "Is this thing never going to end?" And forgetting that I wasn't in 'Nam with the Marines or the First Cav, wondered: "Where's the air and the arty?" But close-in air support and artillery concentrations are luxuries the Salvadoran army can seldom afford.

Yet the soldiers of A Co., despite being outnumbered, were gaining fire superiority. After 45 minutes, troopers began shouting taunts at their enemy: "The guerrillas eat shit. The guerrillas make love to their mothers. The guerrillas are all queers. Come on in, guerrillas, and fight." This last, I thought, was an unnecessary invitation; the guerrillas were plenty close enough to suit me. Then the troopers began laughing. It was like something out of *Beau Geste*.

And then Alpha Co. decided that it had had enough of static-perimeter warfare. Although no officer uttered a command — I learned that this is needless in this army — squads moved out into the bush. Under the command of sergeants, they dashed off in classic small-unit tactics: squads in echelon, each man about four meters from the other, shouting and firing from the hip.

Then, the guerrillas decided that they had had enough. Pulling back in good order and maintaining proper, well-disciplined covering fire, they retreated to new positions farther back up the mountain, which we would take the next day — at a cost.

With about half of the troopers establishing a much wider perimeter now, and others pursuing the guerrillas, the rest returned to their routine chores — although every man thoroughly cleaned his G-3 first. Helmets became cookpots, fires were



EL SALVADOR'S ARMY

El Salvador's principle security force is its approximately 8,000-man army of draftees or men who enlist just prior to being drafted. There is also a somewhat smaller *Guardia Nacional*, which used to play a larger role in countryside-security duties than it now does.

The *Guardia* is composed of "lifers" who are more highly paid (\$450 per month as opposed to \$300) than the regulars, many of whom served a tour in the regular army, liked military life and decided to make it a career. It used to play a more significant role in the fighting than it now does, but the *Guardia* has never been popular among El Salvador's largely peasant-farmer population because it once acted as an almost rural-warlord force and was rough on the peasants.

On the other hand, the army, composed mostly of *campesinos* (rural people) is quite popular with the populace and enjoys much support.

El Salvador also has a small navy of about five gunboats, and an air force of about 50 Mystere fighters, 10 HU-1-D and E helicopters and one Hughes 500 LOACH — which it rents

from its civilian owner.

This is an army of light — and almost obsolete — weaponry. Most of the troops carry H&K G-3 rifles, with one or two museum-piece Danish Madsen 7.62 light machine guns and perhaps four M79 40mm grenade launchers per 150-man company.

There is very little artillery — all of it old 105mm towed howitzers — and since the current fighting is taking place in rough, mountainous terrain, it usually cannot be moved close enough for effective support fire. Only the super-elite units like the Atlacatl Brigade have M16s.

Formal army training is brief — six weeks of boot camp and six more of AIT (advanced infantry training) — if a man is lucky and not sent directly from boot camp to the front lines. Mostly it is OJT (on-the-job training), and a man either learns quickly or does not survive.

Largely because of the Duarte government's land-reform program, which confiscated enormous farms from the control of what were known as "The 14 Families," and distributed it to the peasantry, the men are highly motivated — probably the most gung-ho troops of any Central



El Salvadoran soldiers relax after storming village of Amitlan Abajo in San Vicente Province. Minutes after this photo was taken, communist guerrillas counter-attacked but soldiers drove them off after hour-long fire fight. Civilian stirring soup in steel helmet shell lived in village until insurgents drove him out. He serves as guide for army. Photo: Bob Poos

American country.

In fact, they are the best indigenous troops I've ever seen — and I've seen a lot of them around the world.

Shortly after my arrival in El Salvador, I met an old friend from my Vietnam days, one of the 60-some U.S. Army and Navy advisers in-country. (Several of the advisers were old pals.) I asked him, prior to going on an operation with the regular Salvadoran army (see accompanying story), how they stacked up compared to the ARVN.

He replied: "If you took a brigade from this army, put it down in the Mekong Delta in the south and told it to fight its way north, it wouldn't stop until it hit Hanoi. They'd kick ass and take names from any ARVN unit that ever existed, and I'm including the Marines, Airborne and Rangers. They'd make the North Vietnamese hardhats wish they'd never been born."

My venture into combat with this tough, dedicated little army proved him right. They are the bravest, most motivated indigenous troops I've ever seen. If they weren't, I wouldn't be sitting here writing this story. —B.P.

TACTICAL ERROR

The communist guerrillas made a grievous tactical error when they attacked Alpha Co., First Bn., 5th Brigade, at Amitlan Abajo.

They launched their attack from a distance of about 100 meters. An amazingly (to me at least) quick response by A Company's troopers kept them from getting any closer than about 75 meters.

Had the guerrillas crept up to, say, 25 meters, it might well have been a different story. I think they would have overrun our position and killed a lot of people. Possibly including me.

But as it was, they took a beating and continued to do so in what became during the next two days a clear-cut government victory. And there are not many clear victories in a communist insurgency. —B.P.

kindled to roast the now-plucked chickens and one trooper pulled an aging hunk of beef from his pack, dusted it with some kind of seasoning and proceeded to roast it.

Sgt. Christopher Henriquez, A Company's chief medic, who had been strumming his guitar prior to the attack, resumed doing so.

I talked with A Co. Skipper Capt. David Navas, who spoke English well enough for us to converse.

He told me our opposition at the moment consisted of 200 well-armed, well-trained guerrilla regulars who had been operating out of the area for about a year. They could at any time be joined by another 500 less-well-trained-and-armed irregulars, mostly using Mauser 98 rifles, some M16s courtesy of Vietnam, and 12-gauge shotguns. A Co. had 150 men.

Soldiers not on perimeter began sweeping the area, and it soon became evident why the guerrillas yielded it so reluctantly. The farm building we occupied had been a combination base hospital and guerrilla battalion headquarters. Captured loot included medical records of the guerrilla soldiers. But the main haul was a ton of medical supplies. Much of it was labeled: "Not to be sold. For charitable purposes only."

Capt. Navas said this probably came from charity and church groups in left-leaning Western European nations. There are also rumors that some of it is supplied by the World Council of Churches.

Capt. Navas and I chatted for a long time and he mentioned that Hoagland and I were the first *gringo* war correspondents ever to visit A Co. I asked him how he felt about us. He replied: "I think you are very brave — and very foolish — because it is dangerous out here. But my soldiers and I very much appreciate your coming here to tell our story to the people in your country."

I asked the captain if A Co. were one of the better outfits in the Salvadoran army. He grinned and said: "I like to think so." Captain Navas has 11 years in the army: four at the military academy in San Salvador and seven in the field. He hopes some day to become a military attache in the United States. But right now he is quite happy being skipper of Alpha. I can affirm that he is cool under fire, disdains to take cover, and gives quiet, unemotional reports to battalion over the PRC-77 radio held by his RTO man.

Miraculously, A Co. suffered no casualties in this fire fight, although uniforms were pierced by bullets and one man took an FAL round smack through the top of his steel pot. My estimate of guerrilla casualties — made on the basis of finding fresh graves and large blood clots in the former

EL SALVADOR

communist positions — was that the troopers killed between 20 and 25. When I asked Capt. Navas about it the next day, he said he guessed that was about right. Just like in Vietnam, the guerrillas carry away their dead or bury them on the spot.

Besides the G-3/Madsen/FAL fire, the guerrillas loosed a few RPG rounds, all of which went far over their target — they tend to shoot them like mortars. And A Co.'s troops responded with the few bloop tubes — M79 grenade launchers — they had. Dusk began to fall and Capt. Navas established his command post in a room of the stone house.

The evening became something like a scene from a romantic war movie. Lit by the flame of a flickering candle, the headquarters troops sat around on captured stretchers — which became our cots — listening to Sgt. Henriquez play lively tunes on his guitar and sing lilting Latin American tunes in a beautiful baritone voice. We sipped from canteen cups filled with hot, sweet coffee and talked a little when the sergeant wasn't playing.

At 2100 hours, Capt. Navas decreed that it was time for sleep, so we reclined either on the stretchers or thin blankets the troops carried.

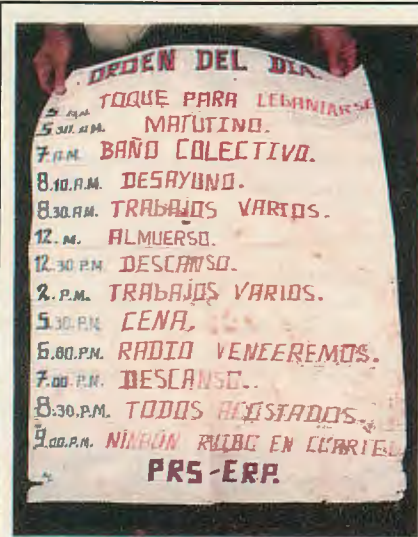
An hour later, the guerrillas hit with their first nighttime probe. After an exchange of a few shots, they decided that that particular part of the line could not be penetrated. They probed about once an hour after that, making it difficult for me to sleep, although the troopers snored happily away. They had been in the field a lot longer than I had.

Reveille came with the first pale light of false dawn. Again, troopers lit campfires, warmed coffee and milk and began making chicken soup. A friendly, grinning soldier brought me a bowl of it and an old C-ration can with milk and sugar. I accepted — a mistake, because the following day I came down with a case of dysentery the likes of which I haven't had since 'Nam.

Soon the search-and-clear mission resumed. A Co.'s next find was a munitions factory with some 40 homemade but lethal claymores in it, and the ingredients for making more in the form of materiel, which included some 200 pounds of ammonium nitrate. Other booty found that day and the day before included stocks of guerrilla clothing and a small cache of weapons, including an FAL, a Mauser 98, a couple of U.S. M1 carbines — one bore the serial number 388286 — a Webley .38, a Japanese Nambu pistol — god knows where they got



ABOVE: SOF Executive Editor Bob Poos makes victory gesture after El Salvadoran government soldiers drove large guerrilla force off. Photo: Everett D. Jackson LEFT: Insurgent battle flag taken at captured guerrilla battalion headquarters. Letters stand for Frente Martin de Liberacion Nacional. Photo: Cynthia E.D. Kite



Captured guerrilla order of the day. Photo: C.E.D. Kite

ORDER OF THE DAY

- 5:00 a.m. Reveille
 - 5:30 a.m. Morning drill
 - 7:00 a.m. Communal bath
 - 8:10 a.m. Breakfast
 - 8:30 a.m. Various chores
 - 12:00 p.m. Lunch
 - 12:30 p.m. Rest
 - 2:00 p.m. Various chores
 - 5:30 p.m. Supper
 - 6:00 p.m. Radio "We Will Conquer"
 - 7:00 p.m. Rest
 - 8:30 p.m. Everyone in bed
 - 9:00 p.m. Silence in quarters
- PRS - ERP

OLD FRIEND

The first Sunday I was in San Salvador I made it a point to visit the Sheraton Hotel, home for most of the 60-some U.S. military advisers in El Salvador.

I was chewing on some barbecued chicken at the open-air barbeque pit and noticed a lean, hard-muscled, sun-bronzed man seated at the circular bar staring at me. Eventually he waved me over. I joined him and he said, "You're Bob Poos of the AP. Remember me? Dick Baker."

Suddenly 16 years slipped away and I recalled that day in 1965 on the beautiful white-sand beach at Nha Trang when he and I lay lazily on blankets at Beach House 9, hangout for off-duty Special Forces troopers.

Baker, a chopper pilot for the SF, and I had both recently returned from unpleasant places, and it was nice to be alive and enjoying the sun at Nha Trang. Baker and I became fast friends during the next two years and it was great to see him again.

The advisers in El Salvador will talk to you if they trust you — I saw several other old acquaintances too — but most insist they not be named. Baker gave me permission to do this short story.

When you go to nasty wars in exotic places, you tend to encounter old buddies.

I know just how good Baker — and the others — are, and I know that although stretched very thin indeed, the Salvadoran army is getting the best training from the best soldiers on earth.

—B.P.



El Salvadoran air force door gunner mans M60 machine gun. El Salvadoran forces only have 10 Huey helicopters which have to be used both as gunships and medevac. Gunships are armed only with an M60 in either door. Photo: John Hoagland for Gamma/Liaison

U.S. EMBASSY

The mood in the U.S. Embassy in El Salvador's capital of San Salvador is reminiscent of that which prevailed at the American Embassy in Saigon — siege/fortress mentality.

It is perhaps understandable. The embassy has been, as of this writing, attacked seven times by communist terrorists — all in a period of 34 days beginning in March this year.

Embassy personnel travel in bullet-proof cars that are housed in the motor pool of the block-square complex, and most of them seldom can be found but at their protected homes or in the compound itself. They are protected by a tough band of ex-soldiers and national police called the "Sharks."

The Sharks carry Browning Hi-Power 9mm automatic pistols and Remington Mod. 870 12-ga. riot guns with an eight-shot magazine extender.

Although the communists have machinegunned the embassy and blasted it with RPG-7 rockets, they have failed to kill or injure any American diplomats or Salvadoran employees.

In one attack, a terrorist was wounded and captured and the car in which he had been riding yielded an Uzi submachine gun.

The Sharks are shy about talking to foreign newsmen, but they had heard of SOF and one man consented



SOF Contributing Editor Robert Burton interviews civilian guard at U.S. Embassy in San Salvador. Photo: Bob Poos

to having his photo taken.

However, one group of Americans at the Embassy doesn't creep around quivering in anxiety about being RPGed or machinegunned. It is the 20-some-man Embassy Security Force of United States Marines.

There is nothing they long for more than another communist attack, because they are to a man tough and they want very badly to waste a terrorist.

And unlike the orders that prevailed in the American Embassy in Iran, these young men can fight back. I asked one trooper clad in cammies and a helmet, who was manning a sandbagged gun position, what they could do to respond to an attack.

His response: "If we see some clown running up the street with an Uzi or an RPG, we can blow him

away." He had been through all seven incidents and he added, "And, man, I'd sure like to."

The new U.S. Ambassador to El Salvador, Deane Hinton, does not grant press interviews and is seldom seen outside the embassy compound — which now has an RPG-proof reinforced concrete wall around it — or his well-defended home.

Still, by all accounts, this Ronald Reagan appointee is a vastly different U.S. diplomatic representative than his predecessor, Jimmy Carter's Robert White — believed to be the first ambassador in modern history to be fired for incompetence. He's the guy who kept insisting that there was no real communist threat in El Salvador. I wish he'd been with me at the battle of Amitlan Abajo. He would have readjusted that theory.

I asked several American diplomats about him and, to a person, they responded: "He was just as big an asshole as he sounded like."

The Marines, despite their gung-ho attitude, have one squawk. They are not permitted to carry handguns for self-defense purposes off-duty. One tough, young buck sergeant, an 0311 infantryman, said bitterly: "They tell us we're too immature."

They are about as immature as the thousands of Marines I saw in the First, Third and Fifth Divisions in Vietnam's Eye Corps. Come on, State Department, give 'em a break.

—B.P.

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that — and a brand-new Savage 12-gauge pump-action riot gun.

The entire village was honeycombed with tunnels and deep underground bomb shelters. Obviously the guerrillas had had a long time to work on it, and they knew exactly what they were doing.

The FAL, Mauser and carbines quickly became the property of four civilian guides, former village residents, who served with A Co. on this operation.

The guides told me that the guerrillas use what seemed to me to be an unusual tactic for communist insurgents. When they moved into the village, they gave the inhabitants an option — join them or move out to San Vicente City and government protection. These men had opted for the latter. As I recall from another war, the VC offered no choices.

The troops continued to make sporadic contact in the village area but, by the sound of it, the guerrillas had decided to move off English Mountain and fight seriously another day. They left reluctantly and in good order, setting up ambushes here and there.

But complications arose. The sound of a fierce fire fight erupted, about two or three clicks away by my estimation. Capt. Navas explained to me that radio reports told him that a relief column had been dispatched to help A Co. deal with the larger guerrilla force. However, the relief column had troubles of its own. It ran into an ambush with strong opposition and was not likely to reach us soon. Capt. Navas didn't seem concerned, so I didn't fret either.

However, the "relief column" caused a problem for A Co. As the guerrillas pulled away gradually from the ambush site, they ran square into Alpha's patrols. Thus Alpha inadvertently became a blocking force. Some short but sharp clashes erupted around the village.

But the guerrillas didn't like what they found in the Alpha troopers and gradually flowed around our positions, while troopers continued aggressive patrolling that resulted in an occasional clash.

And Alpha took its first casualty of the day: Pvt. Ricardo. His squad, searching for the enemy, stumbled into an ambush and Pvt. Ricardo took an FAL round right through the belly, holed from right to left. Sgt. Henriquez and his aide had a customer, and the sergeant immediately changed from grinning, guitar-playing joker to serious field medic. It reminded me of many, too many, such incidents in 'Nam, in



ABOVE: El Salvadoran soldiers prepare to move out in pursuit of communist guerrilla enemy. Man at right is civilian guide. **BELOW:** El Salvadoran rifleman returns fire during long fire fight at village of Amitlan Abajo. El Salvadoran troops commonly use forefinger as brace and index finger as trigger finger on H&K G-3 rifles. **RIGHT:** Alpha Co. Medic Christopher Henriquez plays guitar at Amitlan Abajo village. Photos: Bob Poos





one of which I played the starring role.

And I learned something I didn't know up to that point. The Salvadoran army does not have morphine for relief of pain. It simply cannot afford the expensive drug on its budget. Sgt. Henriquez, in order to give the private some relief, gave his patient Valium® intravenously in one arm. In the other, he stuck a blood-plasma needle from a bottle of dripping solution suspended from a beam of the farmhouse. The Valium® helped a little, but the young soldier obviously suffered enormously even though his only complaint was an occasional low moan.

Pvt. Ricardo clearly was in bad shape — and he had a long way to go. It took six hours for the one Huey slick medevac ship in San Vicente Province to get in, and then he had to endure that long ride to San Vicente's hospital. I took my turn along with his comrades, holding his hand and trying to comfort him. The long wait with the badly wounded soldier was terribly depressing. I didn't think Pvt. Ricardo would make it. After our return to San Salvador, Hoagland called the hospital, talked to the attending physician and learned that Ricardo had survived the operation and would live.

After taking one of my turns trying to comfort the private, I moved into the farmhouse courtyard to take some pictures of the captured material — and then a sniper on a hill about a hundred meters away elected to make me his prime target. He put two rounds about a foot away from my head. Close, but no cigar.

Not desiring to become Pvt. Ricardo's stretchermate, I ran to the lee side of the stone house away from the sniper. I might be dumb to do this sort of thing for a living, but I'm neither brave nor crazy.

The shooting stopped. After lying prone in the mud for a few cautious minutes, I retrieved the stool upon which I had been sitting and wondered, "Why me?" The answer that came to mind was that it was probably because I was dressed in a khaki bush outfit and therefore stood out from the green-clad soldiers. When in the field, I always try to wear exactly the same uniform as the troops I'm accompanying (I have a closet full of stuff from 'Nam, ranging from ARVN Airborne to Nung mercenary cammies), but in this case that approach had proven impossible.

Judging by the sound of gunfire, the relief column, composed of troops from the Atlacatl Brigade, a crack unit trained by U.S. Special Forces advisers, still had its problems, although things were beginning to quiet down around Amatlan Abajo. About time, I thought.

Then I heard the distant but





unmistakable WHACK, WHACK, WHACK from the blades of an incoming Huey. The medevac would finally arrive, and maybe I would get out of this place alive and able to write a story. Both proved to be true.

I shook hands with Capt. Navas and Sgt. Henriquez and wished them and A Co. well. I waited while comrades tenderly loaded Pvt. Ricardo and an attending medic aboard. Next to be loaded was the first batch of captured supplies (it took three trips by the Huey to retrieve all of it) and then I got aboard with Jackson, Hoagland, an officer observer from the 5th Brigade and some troops going home on leave. Nine men in all plus the crew chief, pilot and co-pilot, and the captured material. When the load was completed, our chopper, flown by Lt. Castro, the same man who had piloted the LOACH, would deliver us to the military airport at San Salvador, some 70 kilometers distant.

While flying from Amitlan Abajo to San Vicente and observing the beautiful, lush-green countryside below, several thoughts passed through my mind.

One was that at one time in my life, back when I was an overpaid public relations man in Washington, D.C., I thought I had finished riding



ABOVE: Marine guard at U.S. Embassy in San Salvador studies landscape with binoculars. Embassy has come under communist rocket and machine-gun attack seven times in recent months. Photo: John Hoagland for Gamma / Liaison **LEFT: Huey helicopter circles village of Amitlan Abajo prior to landing to medevac wounded soldier and load captured guerrilla medical stores and claymore mines. Photo: Bob Poos** **BELOW: El Salvadoran soldier from Alpha Co., First Bn., Fifth Brigade, shows rotted boot and practically bare foot. Photo: Bob Poos**



Continued on page 77

VIETNAM INSIGNIAS



Unit Patches Identify A Fighter's History

by William M. Brooks

CURRENT Army regulations allow an individual on duty with the Active Army, Reserves or National Guard to wear the organization shoulder-sleeve insignia of a former wartime unit on the right shoulder of certain dress and field uniforms. (The insignia of the individual's current unit is worn on the left sleeve.)

Individuals who had service in WWII, Korea, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia and the Dominican Republic are authorized to wear wartime service insignia.

For WWII, the dates are between 7 December 1941 and 2 September 1945; Korean service between 27 June 1950 and 27 July 1954, and also for service in the designated fire area of Korea from 1 April 1968 to 1 August 1973, when hostile-fire pay was given; Dominican Republic service from 29 April 1965 to 21 September 1965; service in Laos from 1 January 1966 to 28 March 1973; service in Cambodia from 1 January 1971 to 15 March 1975 and service in Vietnam between July 1958 and March 1973.

Marines have not been authorized to wear unit patches since WWII, and those shown here are the ones they bore during that conflict. Neither the Air Force nor the Navy wore official patches in Vietnam, although some units had their own made up and wore them unofficially. A Marine who served in WWII is authorized to wear the patch of the unit he served with if he is now in the Army.

The insignias pictured here are identified as follows (top to bottom, left to right):

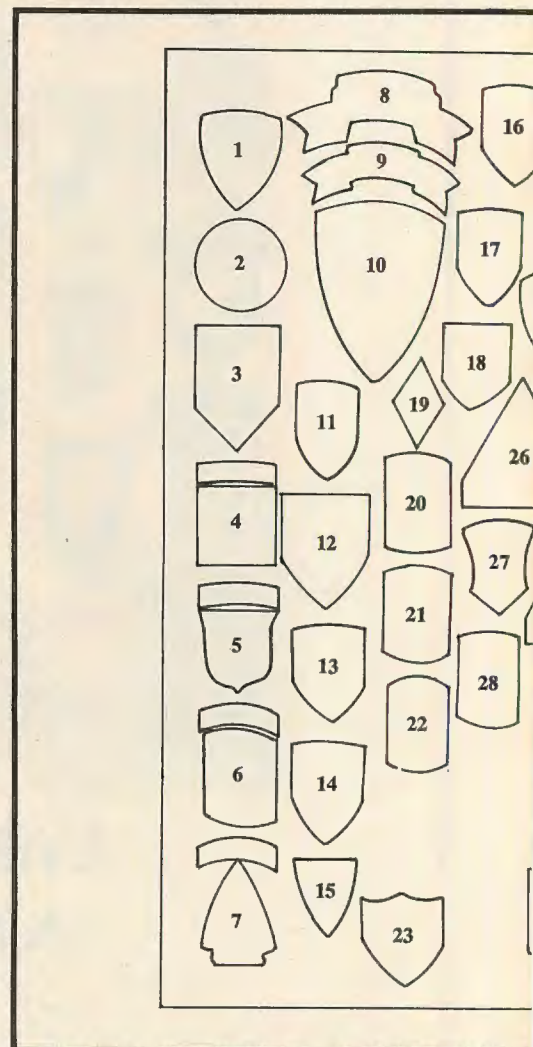
1. **75th Infantry.** The 75th Infantry derived its structural existence from 15 Ranger Companies lettered A through N; O Company was in Alaska. Each Ranger Company was attached to a larger unit, usually a brigade. The insignia shown was produced in 1974 but never authorized for wear.
2. **9th Infantry Division.** The 9th Infantry Division served in the Vietnam Delta region from December 1966 until February 1973. The Division's 1st and 2nd Brigades won U.S. Presidential Unit citations and the 1st and 3rd Brigades won Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Crosses. The 3rd Brigade also won two U. S. Valorous Unit awards.
3. **1st Infantry Division.** The 1st Infantry Division (Big Red One) was the first Army division to serve in Vietnam, arriving in the summer of 1965. The Division served throughout the conflict in War Zone C near Saigon and received many awards for valorous conduct. It withdrew in 1972.
4. **82nd Airborne Division.** The 82nd Airborne Division's 3rd Brigade was airlifted to South Vietnam in February 1968. Its original mission was the protection of the ancient city of Hue. In October 1968, the Brigade moved to the Capital Military District and operated west of Saigon. The 3rd

Brigade earned the Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross.

5. **101st Airborne Division.** The 101st Airborne Division sent one brigade to Vietnam in December 1965. By 1967, the entire Division was engaged. It operated from Saigon to Quang Tri.
6. **173rd Airborne Brigade.** The 173rd Airborne Brigade arrived in Vietnam in May 1965. The 173rd had the distinction of making the only combat parachute jump of the war, on 22 February 1967. The Brigade was involved in heavy fighting at Dak To and Hill 875.
7. **Special Forces.** The 5th Special Forces began deployment of teams in Vietnam in 1962 and remained in action until the American withdrawal in 1973.
8. **Troop F, 9th Cavalry, 1st Air Cavalry Division; formerly Company H, 75th Infantry (unauthorized).** Each company of the 75th Infantry produced its own insignia in Vietnam. These were made locally and worn with the commanding officer's indulgence. The insignia pictured here is a representative piece. Regulations forbid their wearing now.
9. **Ranger Company, 75th Infantry (unauthorized).** In 1974, a substitute shoulder insignia was introduced. This was meant to take the place of the unauthorized, locally produced company insignias of the 75th Infantry's Ranger Companies. Regulations prohibiting the wearing of this insignia have been widely ignored.
10. **1st Air Cavalry Division.** The 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) was one of the first American divisions to be committed to Vietnam, arriving at An Khe in the summer of 1965. The Cav probably participated in more major operations than any other American unit. Its troopers fought the furious, bloody battles of Ia Drang Valley-Chu Pong Mountain and An Thi. Its Seventh Cavalry became particularly famed for getting in the thick of it, but the Seventh had better luck in 'Nam than it did under Gen. George Custer at Little Big Horn.
11. **U.S. Army Engineer Command — Vietnam.** The U.S. Army Engineer Command Vietnam was formed in 1970 to supervise all non-Divisional Engineer elements in Vietnam.
12. **11th Armored Cavalry.** The 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment was sent to Vietnam in September 1966 and served until the American withdrawal. The regiment was engaged in heavy fighting and cited for valorous conduct at An Loc and Loc Ninh. Its original commander was (then) Col. George S. Patton III, son of the famed WWII armored general. Many think the younger Patton at least equaled his father's exploits as an armored-cavalry leader.
13. **1st Signal Brigade.** The 1st Signal

Brigade was formed in April 1966 as part of the Military Assistance Command-Vietnam. The Brigade was deactivated in 1973.

14. **1st Aviation Brigade.** The 1st Aviation Brigade was formed in May 1966 and deactivated after American withdrawal. Its missions included reconnaissance, combat assault and movement of troops and cargo. Every unit within the brigade was decorated for bravery in support of combat operations.
15. **124th Transportation Command.** The 124th Transportation Command was activated in 1967 and deactivated in May 1972.
16. **Military Assistance Command — Vietnam.** The Military Assistance Command — Vietnam was formed in February 1962 and deactivated after American withdrawal.
17. **U.S. Army Vietnam.** U.S. Army Vietnam (USAR-V) was activated in July 1965 to centralize the command of all U.S. combat troops.
18. **23rd Infantry Division "Americal."** The 23rd Infantry Division was reactivated on 25 September 1967 in Vietnam, from remnants of deactivated Task Force Oregon. The "Americal" was the only Army division to be under the operational control of the



Marine Corps (Third Marine Amphibious Force). The "Americal" was also the largest American division to serve in Vietnam, with a TO&E strength in March 1969 of more than 30,000 men.

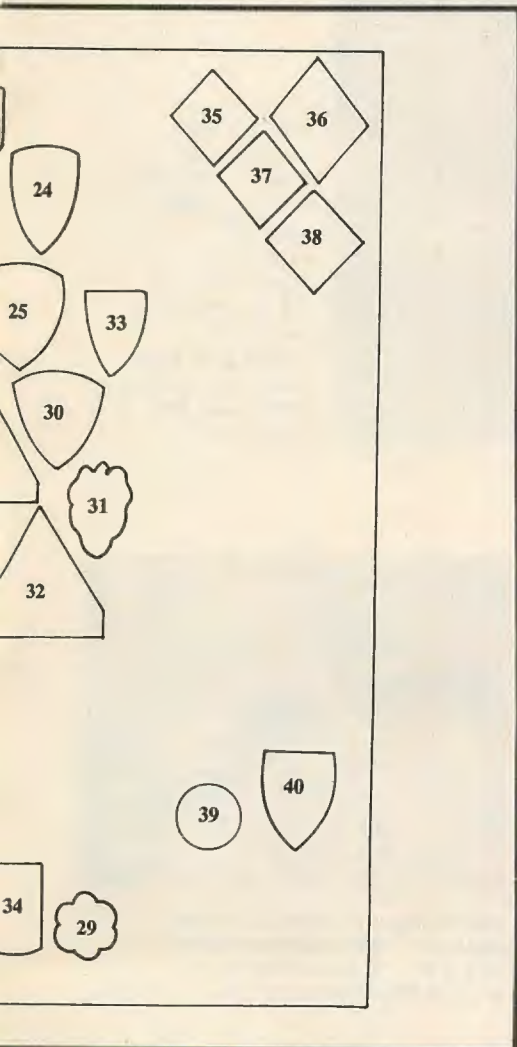
19. **1st Brigade, 5th Infantry Division (Mechanized).** The 1st Brigade of the 5th Mech arrived in Vietnam in March 1968 and confined its activities to the area along the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ). The Division withdrew in 1972.
20. **199th Infantry Brigade.** The 199th Infantry Brigade arrived in Vietnam in December 1966 and was assigned the mission of protecting the capital of Saigon. The Brigade earned the U.S. Valorous Unit Award and the Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross during the 1968 Tet offensive. It was deactivated after U.S. withdrawal.
21. **198th Infantry Brigade.** The 198th Infantry Brigade first fought as a separate unit, but in February 1969, it became attached to the 23rd "Americal" Division. The Brigade was awarded the Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross in 1968, and deactivated after U.S. withdrawal.
22. **11th Infantry Brigade.** The 11th Infantry Brigade became a part of the 23rd "Americal" Division in

February 1969, thereby losing its status as an independent unit. The Brigade earned the Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross. It was deactivated upon U.S. withdrawal from the war.

23. **XXIV Corps.** The 24th Corps was reactivated on 15 August 1968 and sent to the DMZ area of Vietnam where it controlled combat operations of the region. The Corps was deactivated upon U.S. withdrawal.
24. **2nd Field Force.** The 2nd Field Force, formerly the XXII Corps, was activated in January 1966, and arrived in Vietnam in March of the same year. The Force was deactivated after American withdrawal.
25. **5th Marine Division.** The 5th Marine Division arrived in Vietnam from Okinawa in the summer of 1965. The Division was deployed from the DMZ to Da Nang. The Fifth's 26 Marines bore the brunt of heavy fighting at Khe Sanh Combat Base after relieving the Third Marine Division's Third Regiment. Its commander, Col. David Lownds, received the Medal of Honor for directing that battle.
26. **2nd Armored Division.** The 2nd Armored Division was in reality the 2nd Squadron, 1st Cavalry. Arriving in Vietnam in August 1967, with diesel-powered M113A1 APCs, modified with AGAV kits, the 2nd Squadron and the 1st Squadron were never relieved of their respective assignments to the 2nd and 1st Armored Divisions. Personnel from these units became the first and only armored personnel since World War II authorized to wear an armored-division wartime shoulder-sleeve insignia.
27. **1st Field Force.** The First Field Force was originally designated Task Force Alpha, then Field Force Vietnam and finally 1st Field Force in March 1966, when the 2nd Field Force was activated. The Force was deactivated upon American withdrawal.
28. **196th Infantry Brigade.** The 196th Infantry Brigade was originally designated a separate unit but lost its status as such in February 1969, when it transferred to the "Americal" Division. The Brigade won the Republic of Vietnam Valorous Unit Award and the Vietnam Cross of Gallantry. It was deactivated upon U.S. withdrawal.
29. **125th Transportation Command.** The 125th Transportation Command was activated in Vietnam in 1967 and deactivated in 1970.
30. **3rd Marine Division.** The 3rd Marine Division was the first American ground force to enter the Vietnam War; advance elements began arriving in late March 1965, with the complete Division assembled in July of that year. The unit was part of the III Marine Amphibious Force and deployed along the DMZ.

31. **25th Infantry Division.** The 25th Infantry Division (Tropic Lightning) sent one brigade to Vietnam in 1965, followed by the entire division, arriving in April 1966. The Division operated near An Khe, in the Central Highlands and around Pleiku.
32. **1st Armored Division.** The 1st Armored Division was in reality the 1st Squadron, 1st Cavalry. (See explanation for No. 26.)
33. **The Military Assistance Advisory Group — Vietnam, U.S. Army Mission.** The U.S. Army Mission shoulder-sleeve insignia is authorized to be worn by personnel assigned to Mission duty overseas. The MAAG-Vietnam tab displayed over the Mission patch was separate and was authorized to be worn by personnel assigned to MAAG duty in Vietnam. Our photograph is missing the MAAG-Vietnam tab.
34. **44th Medical Brigade.** The 44th Medical Brigade was activated in January 1966 and sent to Vietnam in April of the same year. Many subunits assigned to the Brigade supplied medical support throughout the entire country.
35. **18th Engineer Brigade.** The 18th Engineer Brigade arrived in Vietnam in September 1965; the insignia shown was approved for wear in February 1966. The unit was deactivated in September 1971.
36. **1st Marine Division.** The 1st Marine Division was under command of the III Marine Amphibious Force. The Division arrived in Vietnam in August 1965 and distinguished itself during hard fighting south of Chu Lai. The First Division's Fifth Regiment, one of the two oldest regiments in the Corps, retook the ancient imperial capital of Hue from North Vietnamese troops during the Tet offensive.
37. **4th Infantry Division.** The 4th Infantry Division went to Vietnam in March 1968. It fought in the area west of Pleiku to the Cambodian border.
38. **20th Engineer Brigade.** The 20th Engineer Brigade arrived in Vietnam in May 1967 and withdrew at the suspension of American involvement.
39. **9th Logistical Command.** The 9th Log was one of the first American units to send elements to the Republic of Vietnam when the state of emergency was called in October 1961. It was absorbed into U.S. Army Vietnam.
40. **18th Military Police Brigade.** The 18th Military Police Brigade arrived in Vietnam in September 1966. The Brigade was responsible for all non-divisional military-police units in Vietnam and operated a River Boat Company. The Brigade was deactivated in May 1973.

If you have any questions or additions, write William Brooks, Box 6505, Wrightsville Beach, NC 28480.



DOC DATER'S DEADLY DEVICES

SOF Tests AWC Sound Suppressors

Text & Photos by Peter G. Kokalis



LEFT: Doc Dater aims full-auto M16A1 carbine with M22 suppressor attached.

BELOW LEFT: Walther PPK/S in .22 LR with R22-SL suppressor.

LOWER LEFT: Ruger auto pistol, caliber .22 LR, with RST suppressor.

TUCKED away in the foothills outside of Albuquerque, N.M., lies one of the most intriguing operations in the field of exotic weaponry. The brainchild of Dr. Philip H. Dater, a practicing radiologist, Automatic Weapons Company stands in the forefront of modern sound-suppressor design and execution.

Suppressors are referred to as "silencers" by the unknowledgeable, "whispering death" by hack writers, and "cans" by those who make them. The first successful suppressor designs are generally conceded to be those marketed by Hiram P. Maxim, son of the famous machine-gun inventor. The younger Maxim's designs date from 1909-1912 and were manufactured until 1930. During this period, other manufacturers, such as Parker-Hale, Moore, and Hopkins & Allen, produced and distributed suppressors, some of



ABOVE: Ruger AC 556K in full-auto mode with MXM sound moderator attached - far more effective than original XM-177E2 muzzle unit.

which were attached to the 1903 Springfield rifle and used by the U.S. Army in WWI. The early military results were somewhat disappointing and, in any event, domestic sales virtually ceased with enactment of the National Firearms Act of 1934.

WWII saw the advent of a new generation of suppressed weapons. The British Sten MkIIS submachine gun and Welrod pistol, and the American suppressed High Standard pistols and M3 (and M3A1) submachine guns are but a few of the more prominent examples.

As the Korean War was fought, by both sides, almost entirely with weapons of WWII vintage, no new suppressors came from this conflict.

Vietnam, however, brought forth a new era of military small arms. Suppressors also reached a new plateau, especially for use with gas-operated, locked-breech, full-automatic weapons. Mitchell WerBell, head of the now defunct Military Armament Corporation, certainly led the way with his fine Sionics designs, and his gas-pressure relief valve, then unique, which held the cyclic rate of suppressed gas-operated auto weapons down to a usable level.

What sounds produced by a firearm are of concern to us? First, in the case of a semi- or full-auto weapon, there is the noise of the action itself, or "bolt clatter," as it is commonly called. Little can be done to reduce this sound. Although it is usually of small consequence at any significant distance from the weapon, if the mission should require the maximum in sound reduction, then a single-shot or bolt-action firearm, such as the Welrod, must be used.

The second, and by far the loudest, sound is the so-called muzzle blast — created by the shock waves produced by the sudden expansion of the hot propellant gasses as they encounter the

Pressure equals temperature multiplied by a constant divided by volume.

atmosphere at the muzzle's end. It is this sound to which all suppressors, successful or not, address themselves.

Finally, if the projectile's velocity exceeds the speed of sound (1,087.5 ft./sec. at 32°F at sea level), there will be produced a miniature sonic boom downrange from the weapon.

All successful sound suppressors, whether their designers knew it or not (and many did not), use a single formula from physics known as the GENERAL-GAS LAW. Applicable to all ideal gasses, the equation states that pressure equals temperature multiplied by a constant divided by volume. As muzzle blast is a consequence of relatively high-pressure gasses exiting the barrel, reduction of this pressure immediately before exit, by either increasing the volume or decreasing the temperature (cooling), or both, will reduce the sound.

There are essentially three types of suppressors. The oldest is the muzzle suppressor, attached to the end of a



barrel, which has been threaded either internally or externally to accept it. Examples are the Maxim and the MAC Sionics produced for the M16.

The second type is called a barrel suppressor, since it literally envelops the barrel, which has been ported (drilled with holes). This type is usually combined with a muzzle suppressor to create the third form, not surprisingly called the combination suppressor. While this latter is quite obviously the most efficient (examples: OSS High Standard, Sten MkIIS, and the Sterling L34A1), the muzzle suppressor retains the advantage of being able to be switched from weapon to weapon legally to the suppressor with the BATF — a perhaps significant consideration to the owner.

Suppressors can be evaluated and compared by a logarithmic ratio, commonly used in the sound industry, called the decibel (db). The noise level of ordinary conversation is 60-db, and that of the threshold of pain, and of a .22 LR pistol, is about 120-db. Sound levels are usually measured by microphones attached either to voltmeters or oscilloscopes. These linear responses are then converted into the logarithmic ratio, which is the decibel. The logarithmic nature of the db is important to keep in mind, as a 10-db decrease in the sound level is 1/10 of the original noise level, a 20-db decrease is 1/100 of the original, and a 26-db decrease is only 1/400 of the original sound-pressure level! However, because the sensitivity curve of the ear is also logarithmic, decreasing the sound energy to a hundredth of its value halves the apparent sound.



ABOVE: M30 suppressor disassembled: outer tube (top), followed by baffles, disassembly tools, and bushings to adapt the unit to different weapons. UPPER LEFT: Randy Franklin fires MAC-10, in caliber .45 ACP, equipped with Sionics suppressor and Dater's Superwipe. LEFT: Assortment of Dater's suppressors and weapons.

It is also important to understand that the sound level diminishes with the square of the distance from its source. That is, if you double the distance, the sound energy drops by 75%; at 10 times the distance, the sound energy drops by 99%. Therefore, if we can significantly reduce muzzle blast, the sound level at combat distances can become inaudible and the source itself completely undetectable.

Some years ago, Phil Dater obtained a Sionics suppressed Ruger Mark I pistol. After several thousand rounds the suppression effect faded and finally disappeared completely. As he had invested not only the cost of the unit but a \$200 transfer tax as well, Dater called Military Armaments Corporation to inquire about having the unit rebuilt. He was informed that this was impossible — the suppressor had been manufactured for the military and intelligence markets which would “deep-six” it after several hundred rounds. Infuriated and feeling he had nothing to lose, Dater tore into the suppressor and began to study its design. After obtaining the necessary replacement materials at the corner supermarket, he was able to restore its effectiveness.

From this beginning of imaginative response to frustration has evolved the most skillfully produced, and quite possibly the most effective, line of suppressors on the market today. All of Dater's suppressors can be maintained and repacked easily by their owners — and all special tools necessary to do so are included with the suppressor. The

Dater's suppressors are all constructed of the highest aircraft-grade steel and aluminum alloys.

repacking materials are available anywhere. Detailed instruction manuals are provided which enable the suppressor's owner to keep his unit at peak efficiency for a lifetime of use — a unique and gratifying first in the suppressor field.

Dater's suppressors are all constructed of the highest aircraft-grade steel and aluminum alloys. All steel parts, including internal ones, are deep-black-oxide-blued, except for the steel baffles in the .223 and .30 rifle suppressors which are hard-chromed. The external aluminum parts are black-anodized. Internal aluminum parts are left in their natural condition for thermodynamic reasons.

In addition to the outer tube and front-end cap, Dater's suppressors usually consist of various combinations of the following components: baffles, packing material, ported barrels, perforated sleeves, screen rolls, barrel sleeves, spacers, collets, pressure relief ports, barrel extensions and rear mounts.



ABOVE: Robert K. Brown uses American 180 caliber .22 LR submachine gun, AM8 suppressor and Weaver Qwik-Point scope.

LEFT: Dr. Philip H. Dater and Robert K. Brown attach all-stainless-steel suppressor to stainless-steel Ruger Mini-14.



ABOVE: Doc Dater uses unique, disposable suppressor on Browning .22 LR auto rifle.



ABOVE: Robert K. Brown uses Dater-suppressed Mk II Sten submachine gun.

LEFT: Doc Dater lets off burst with S&W Md76 submachine gun fitted with his suppressor. The "can" gets quite hot without protective cover.

Automatic Weapons Company currently offers suppressors for the Ruger .22 LR auto pistol; a variety of other .22 LR auto pistols; the Ruger 10/22 and Armalite AR-7 .22 LR rifles; the S&W Md76 and Sten MkII 9mm submachine guns; .223 assault rifles such as the M16 series, Mini-14, AR-18, HK-93, and Galil SAR; .30-caliber assault rifles like the SIG 510-4, HK-91, and various bolt-action .30-caliber rifles; the M3 or M3A1 .45 ACP submachine gun; the Ruger No. 3 rifle in numerous calibers; the American 180 .22 LR submachine gun; and the Thompson Contender pistol. Suppressors can be custom-fitted to many other weapons.

Television crime dramas notwithstanding, revolvers cannot be successfully suppressed, as it is not feasible to contain the appreciable amount of pressure and blast released through the gap between the cylinder and forcing cone.

Recently, SOF publisher Robert K. Brown and I were given an opportunity to spend an entire day testing Doc Dater's products.

First on line was the impressive, heavy (4.5 pounds) M30 suppressor, which was first attached to a .300 Winchester Magnum. Sound suppression was excellent, but even more noticeable in this caliber was the considerable reduction in recoil. This usually unmentioned side benefit of sound suppressors is frequently coupled with greater flash suppression as well.

After installing the M30 unit on a SIG 510-4 assault rifle in 7.62mm NATO, Brown, who has enough true grit for another dozen of the rest of us, marched 100 yards downrange and instructed me to fire, using some subsonic loads (below 1,100 fps), 40 yards to his right into the base of a small hill. Brown reported that the results were excellent and that only the bullet's impact could be heard from his location.

Dater and others do not believe in using subsonic ammunition in calibers such as .223 or .308. In order to eliminate the downrange ballistic crack, one must sacrifice the velocity which projectiles in these calibers require to get downrange and do their job effectively. As the weapon's location cannot be detected from this downrange sound alone, subsonic ammo, in these military rifle calibers, is a dubious trade-off. However, if the op absolutely requires the use of subsonic ammo, the heaviest, bluntest projectile available should be selected.

Testing continued with Ruger No. 3 rifles in .223 and .45-70. Sound suppression was again remarkable. Because of its light weight and a 500-grain bullet, the Ruger No. 3, even suppressed, remained almost as ugly as ever to shoot in .45-70.

The M22 unit demonstrated its

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DOC DATER

versatility when we tried it on an M16A1 carbine, a stainless-steel Mini-14, and finally a Ruger AC 556K. The degree of suppression was about 20-db, producing 1/100 of the original sound, quite a bit less than a standard .22 LR rifle and slightly more effective than the original MAC/Sionics suppressor for the M16. With gas-operated, locked-breech, full-auto weapons, Dater uses a series of pressure relief ports around the rear mount to accomplish, without any cumbersome protrusions, what Mitch WerBell did with his pressure-relief valve - hold the cyclic rate of these weapons down to a useful level.

When we noticed that the first round sounded louder than the succeeding ones, Dater explained that this was a result of oxygen trapped in the suppressor can and ignited by the first round. This phenomenon can be eliminated by taping the suppressor's muzzle end and jetting in a small amount of carbon dioxide (CO₂) from the breech end of the weapon.

The model MXM sound moderator was also used on the .223 assault rifles. Designed to replace the original flash/muzzle-blast-suppression unit of the Colt XM-177E2, it is far more effective than the original Colt muzzle piece. The degree of suppression is only 10-db, but it serves its purpose admirably, as the short-barreled .223 assault rifles are all more pleasant to shoot and easier to control with the MXM sound moderator in place.

The Dater-modified Ruger 10/22 rifle and Mk I pistol in .22 LR feature integral sound suppressors. The sound was somewhat less than that of a CO₂ pellet pistol - impressive, to say the least.

Submachine guns were next, both a suppressed S&W Md76 and a Mk II Sten. Their suppressors were a combination barrel/muzzle-type which feature a specially made barrel that is



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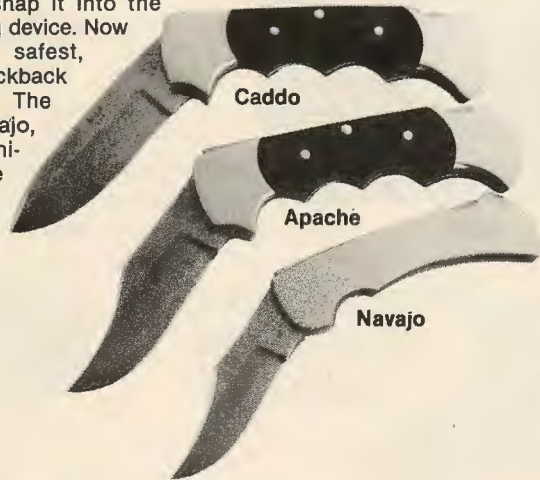


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an integral part of the system. The barrels are drilled with ports which assist in dropping most 9mm ammo into the subsonic range for maximum suppression. No modification of the weapon itself is required. Dater can even supply a sleeve to block the barrel ports at the breech end, if the customer desires to fire milder, reloaded ammunition on occasion.

Dater is the only suppressor manufacturer actually to recommend the use of cast bullets with his product. Although they have long been considered taboo with suppressed weapons, Dater stresses that it's simply a matter of making sure that all burrs have been removed from the specially ported barrel after the drilling operation, a painstaking and tricky lapping operation.

The degree of suppression on the S&W Md76 and Mk II Sten was about 18-db, a bitching performance for suppressed submachine guns. Because of the manner in which they are commonly held, and because suppressors in full auto get more than a little warm, a Nomex or Neoprene cover should be used on all submachine-gun "cans."

Testing concluded with an American 180 submachine gun in .22 LR, fitted with the AM8 suppressor and a Weaver Qwik-Point scope. While blasting all sagebrush in the vicinity into powdered oblivion, we heard no sound other than

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6. PISTOL CASES, black only. Constructed of waterproof-tear resistant cordura nylon. Surrounds pistol with one inch thick foam padding. Available in three sizes: 10" \$7.00, 12" \$8.00, 14" \$9.00
7. WALLET, black or camouflage. Constructed of nylon. Tri-fold style with velcro flap and Assault Systems logo. \$7.95
8. SUPPRESSOR DUMMY, does not quiet weapon but looks like original stonics. Exact duplicate weight and size. Attaches to rifle and can be fired through. Comes with letter of approval from A.T.F. Available for AR-15, M-16 \$60. H-K 91 and 93 \$75. M1A and M14 \$75.
9. HAT (not shown) black nylon baseball style, with ASSAULT SYSTEMS logo. \$6.95

the tiny bolt clattering back and forth.

As if all of the above were not enough, Dater also markets a Superwipe for the MAC 10/11 suppressor. Although not considered to be a suppressor by itself, as it cannot be attached directly to a firearm, it replaces the original MAC end-wipe assembly. Its additional sound-suppressing chamber significantly increases the efficiency of the MAC suppressor. Containing no rubber baffles, which might touch the projectile, it cannot decrease accuracy, as the MAC end wipes often do.

During a brief lull, Brown asked Dater who buys his suppressors and for what purposes. Although he has sold a few units to government operatives, most of his customers are either ranchers or farmers who desire to eliminate pests and predators without disturbing livestock; target shooters who use the devices for indoor or backyard practice; and military collectors who are seeking examples of suppressed weaponry and who usually enjoy shooting them as well.

The legal requirements for owning a suppressor are in general identical to those for possession of a machine gun (see "Yearn for a MG?," SOF, July '81), with the exception that there are a few states which allow auto weapons but prohibit suppressors. On the federal level, both machine guns and suppressors are controlled by the National Firearms Act of 1934 and the Gun Control Act of 1968. The most important requirements are that the prospective owner be a U.S. citizen, of legal age, free of any felony convictions, and reside in a state or municipality where suppressors are not prohibited. For more information contact either your local Class 3 dealer (through whom such a transfer must be made), the BATF, or Automatic Weapons Company. A \$200 transfer tax is required when a suppressor is passed to an individual.

Essentially custom-made, Dater's products are not cheap. All suppressors manufactured by Automatic Weapons Company are warranted to be free of defects in materials and workmanship for a period of one year, assuming the units are not abused and their structural limitations are observed. No other suppressor manufacturer currently offers such a warranty.

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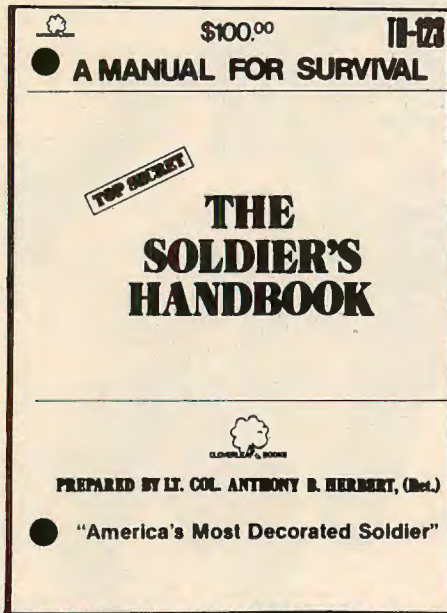
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Jim Townsend
Editor

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Los Angeles Herald Examiner, Wednesday, Aug. 27

The book's already a big hit among old military hands, narcotics folk, cops, corporations and individuals with more than just a little to protect. And, promises Herbert, the book will be updated periodically. Which might prove necessary. After all, you never know when another Noble Cause may come loping around the next corner. □

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Continued from page 6

VIETNAM MEMORIAL ...

The long-planned Vietnam Veterans War Memorial in Washington, D.C., has moved a step closer to realization with the recent selection of Maya Ying Lin's design from among 1,420 entries in a design competition for the monument.

Situated on a two-acre, parklike site, Lin's plan calls for twin slabs of black granite to rise from the ground and connect to form an inverted "V" — on which the names of the 57,692 American soldiers who died in Vietnam will be inscribed. The monument is expected to be completed by Veteran's Day, 1982.

SOF IN CHINA ...

SOF author Nick Uhernik, who did a memorable series of articles on his experiences as an Army MP in Saigon, recently sent us a translation from an article that appeared in the 25 April 1981 issue of *Blue Cover Magazine*, a Chinese publication printed in Hong Kong. Entitled "Mercenary Magazine Available on Newsstands," excerpts from the article state:

"To a lot of people, memories of war are memories of dead and tortured human beings — tragedy to be forgotten. But to a growing breed of international men, war is a time of courage, adventure and excitement. A time when men prove themselves on the battlefields of the world.

"And now Robert Brown, a U.S. Army Reserve colonel, has come along with a monthly magazine dedicated to preserving accounts of the gallantry and bravery and courage that are commonplace in fire fights and lonely jungle encounters across Asia and Africa. *Soldier of Fortune* is that magazine, and Brown, a 47-year-old Vietnam veteran who spent three years fighting in Southeast Asia, states his journal is a publication for and about professional adventurers....

"SOF, the first issue of which Brown financed with his own \$U.S. 10,000 (4,400 subscribers), continued to popularize the escapades of his fellow military men and bedside readers, 17 percent of whom are police officers, 36 percent Vietnam veterans, 47 percent soldiers.



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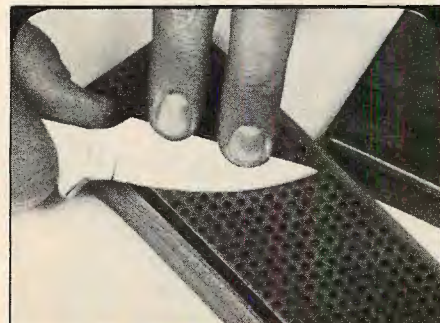
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"Although newspapers in Australia say SOF teaches the murder of civilians, and newspapers in Russia say SOF is a killer's guide, Brown maintains the magazine is a journal of professional adventurers, just as the cover implies.

"*Soldier of Fortune Magazine* is definitely not written by deskbound dreamers. Brown and several of his staff flew to Africa in 1979 and participated in probably the last fire fight in Rhodesia before the fall of that country. Although they were not paid as mercenaries, and Brown maintains the gunplay was in self-defense and in the interests of survival, the incident shows the staff of SOF to be involved in what they write about - and that's why the readers buy it."

NEW MARINE ASS'T. COMMANDANT ...

Gen. Paul X. Kelley, former CO of the Rapid Deployment Joint Task Force, has been named Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps.

Kelley replaces Gen. Kenneth McLennan, who retired.

Gen. Kelley, 52, assumed office 31 years after receiving his commission following graduation from Villanova University. He became the RDJTF's first commander when it was formed in March 1980.

And there are rumors about the RDJTF's future. The scuttlebutt is that it will become an entirely Marine unit as far as ground forces are concerned. In other words, the RDJTF will become the RDF, a role which the Marines have in actuality been playing for many years.

MONTAGNARD MUTINY MOVIE ...

Fontana's Unlimited, a film production company in California, is seeking information about the Rhade uprising against the South Vietnamese government in September 1964.

It is seeking to contact U.S. Special Forces troopers and others who were in the Ban Me Thuot-Pleiku area at the time.

The firm may be reached by writing: Richard Fontana, Production Coordinator; Fontana's Unlimited, 11409 Albers St., North Hollywood, CA 91601, or calling (213) 766-6120.

Specifically the firm wishes to contact or locate: Maj. Edwin E. Brooks, of Belleville, Mich., commander of U.S. Special Forces in the area of Ban Me Thout; Col. John Freund, Vienna, Va., deputy senior adviser of the 2nd Corps Tactical Zone; Capt. Vernon W.

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Gillespie, Lawton, Okla., Special Forces commander, Buon Brieng; Capt. Richard Haskell, Old Town, Maine, Special Forces surgeon; First Lt. George Markos, Fort Worth, Texas; Capt. Edward A. Spencer, Albuquerque, N.M.; Lt. John T. Horn; Sgt. Gene Bell; Sgt. Ronald Wingo; Sgt. William Ingram; Sgt. Earl Bleacher; and Sgt. Vincent Skeeba.

9MM SILENCERS . . .

U.S. gun manufacturers have been asked to develop special silencers — for counterinsurgency and special operations — for what will become the military's standard handgun, a 9mm.

A re-evaluation of which 9mm specifically will be chosen is also going on, but a decision is expected soon, according to Jack Robbins, project manager at Eglin Air Force Base's Bombs and Rockets Division, where the various handguns in the competition were tested and evaluated.

Robbins said the first order will be for 217,439 pistols over a five-year period.

Also being developed are supersonically 9mm rounds for unsilenced weapons and subsonic for those equipped with silencers.

All the projects are to be completed within the next year.

CIA WANTS YOU . . .

Central Intelligence recruiters say they expect at least 1,000 applications in response to an ad placed recently in the *Wall Street Journal* for entry-level agents, and they are considering stepping up recruitment efforts by running radio and TV advertisements.

The National Security Agency is considering similar recruiting efforts.

The CIA ad offers agent-candidates a starting salary of \$22,000 per year, depending on a candidate's qualifications.

Some reports say that the Agency has also been offering salaries as high as \$60,000 for ex-Green Berets and other professionals to spend 90 days training Iranian insurgent fighters.

AND FROM CENTRAL AMERICA . . .

Much to our delight, pro-communist publications continue to be outraged by SOF's support of freedom fighters around the world.

The following, an excerpt from an editorial in the Honduran daily *Tiempo*, concerns our Nicaraguan Freedom Fighters' Relief Fund:

"On several occasions in our country, Somozan counterrevolutionary activity has been denounced. The regime has always been ready to deny the frequent assertions of this type made by the Honduran Solidarity Committee with the common people of Nicaragua. All right, it turns out that abroad, in the United States and, apparently, in the monthly mercenary publication, public allusion is made to the Somozan activities in Honduras. And not only that: public support is sought for the counterrevolution and the address to which to send this help is openly and directly supplied.

"The regime, as is its custom, will remain silent. Its silence must be understood as yet one more test of the tolerance and irresponsibility that characterize official politics when it comes to the counterrevolution in Central America.

"In the meantime, the editors of *Soldier of Fortune* may continue to receive help in financing and equipping the counterrevolution. They will have the opportunity to see if, as in Angola and Mozambique, fortune does not always accompany its soldiers."

SOF AND USSR . . .

Two items of interest to SOF readers were published in the June issue of *Asian Defense Journal*. The first states that Robert K. Brown, edi-

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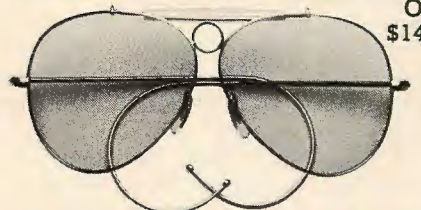
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tor/publisher of *Soldier of Fortune* Magazine, has caused chagrin in the U.S. CIA/DIA communities with his "procurement" in Afghanistan of Russian weaponry, including AK-74 rounds, the PFM-1 anti-personnel mine and a 30mm round from the Soviet AGS-17 Plamy automatic grenade launcher.

The second quotes an article by Richard Pipes, professor of history at Harvard University and former director of the Russian Research Center there. The article appeared in the Fall 1980 issue of *Daedalus* and addressed the problem of the Western world's ignorance of USSR militarism.

Pipes declares, "To a historian of Russia, the assertion that throughout its history this country has undergone an extraordinary number of foreign invasions and as a consequence developed a collective paranoia simply does not hold water. It is true, of course, that during their thousand-year history the Russians have suffered three especially devastating invasions: by the Mongol-Tatars in the 13th century, by the French and Prussians in 1812 and by the Nazis in 1941."

But, Pipes asks, are those who trot out these "facts aware of the number of times that the Russians have invaded and inflicted comparable traumas on their neighbors?"

Specialists, he declares, are aware of "Russian aggressions, such as the 16th century offensive in the East that resulted in the subjugation of the Muslim principalities of Kazan and Astrakhan; the conquest in the 17th century of Siberia; the continuous offensive against the Ottoman Empire and the partition of Poland in the 18th century; the conquest of Turkestan and the seizure of Chinese territories in the 19th century."

Pipes states that, by relentless movement outwards, "Russia has expanded until she came to occupy one-sixth of the Earth's land surface. To recall this record is not to attribute to the Russians uniquely aggressive proclivities; it is merely to correct a widespread misperception of them as a uniquely defense-minded people."

The Harvard professor concludes, "To carry out its conquests, Russia devoted a lion's share of its national wealth to military purposes."

AFGHAN AID THANKS . . .

SOF Editor/Publisher Robert K. Brown received the following letter from Don Weidenweber, Founder of American Aid for Afghans:

"Thank you for your contribution to American Aid For Afghans. Every cent of your donation will be transferred to



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purchase food and medicine for the freedom fighters in Afghanistan.

We encourage you to expand your support by taking time to:

1. Urge Congressmen in Washington, D.C., to support the freedom fighters, to continue the Soviet economic sanctions and to diplomatically censure the Soviets at every opportunity.

2. Write the news media urging coverage of Afghanistan and support of the freedom fighters. Reference our efforts where applicable.

3. Remember the Afghans in your prayers.

4. Send in periodic donations to American Aid For Afghans.

5. Get at least two of your friends to join in this cause.

24TH INFANTRY DIVISION ASSOCIATION . . .

The 24th Infantry Division Association is an organization of men who have at some time in their lives served in a unit assigned to the U.S. Army's 24th Infantry Division. The Association was formed immediately after WWII to perpetuate the friendships and close associations developed during those war years. Since then, it has opened its membership to all who wear or have worn the Taro Leaf shoulder patch.

For further information, contact: 24th Infantry Division Association, 120 Maple St., Springfield, MA 01103.

DRAFT BOARDS REBORN . . .

Draft boards are back with us, and there is much speculation that the draft itself will be a reality soon because of the dreadful Army personnel situation.

Each of the new boards, 2,000 of them in the United States and Puerto Rico, has about five unpaid members.

Should Congress authorize a return to the draft, the boards would hear and decide appeals by young men who feel they should not be drafted. They would, for example, decide who qualifies as a conscientious objector.

In a national lottery, all men registered would be classified 1-A, fit for duty, automatically. Then they would get physicals, and appeals for exemption would be heard by local boards.

The reason for appointing boards now when there is no draft is to train members in Selective Service policies and procedures. This would ensure uniform treatment if the draft is resumed.

Oh, well, young man, there's always a way to avoid being drafted: Join the Marines or the Airborne.



President Reagan

Continued from page 2

gunships. If you want to know where there is a surplus of perfectly suitable Huey (HU-1-D) helicopters, I can tell you. Recently I had an airline layover at Billings, Mont. Upon landing, I noticed scores, perhaps hundreds, of Hueys and H-34s. I asked a fellow passenger what they were doing there. He replied: "Belong to the National Guard. Got almost a helicopter per trooper." I'm sure similar situations prevail throughout this enormous country.

The jungle boots of the Salvadoran soldiers are rotting off — and they have no resupply sources. The army has no funds with which to purchase boots and we haven't sent them any. We've got more than we know what to do with. No cost to the taxpayer.

The Salvadoran units with which I was in combat had no light artillery and no mortars. Can you visualize what it is like to fight a numerically superior, better-armed force with no support weapons? It requires enormous courage — which the Salvadoran army has in spades.

But the saddest thing I saw, Mr. President, was during the second day of combat when a young, perhaps 17- or 18-year-old, soldier took an FAL bullet through the stomach. The company medics had no morphine syrettes with which to ease his pain. The army cannot afford morphine. The medics had to treat the young man with intravenous feedings of Valium®. That's not much relief for a stomach wound, Mr. President. I had been sitting with that soldier minutes before he was shot and it terrified me to think of sharing his fate, which I very nearly did later.

And worst of all, he had to wait for six hours to be medevacked to a hospital, because San Vicente Province, where the fighting occurred, has only one of those 10 Hueys I mentioned. It was dreadfully depressing to sit there and hold that soldier's hand and know that help was hours away. By the grace of God, he survived.

A closing thought, Mr. President: A lot of intellectuals who should have known better used to discredit the "Domino Theory" in Southeast Asia. Well, the dominoes all fell to the communists. I saw it happen.

El Salvador is a Latin American domino targeted by the communists. If it goes, Honduras follows and then Guatemala, the rest of Central America, and then, all too possibly, Mexico, or a large slice of it.

And that's too close to home, Mr. President.

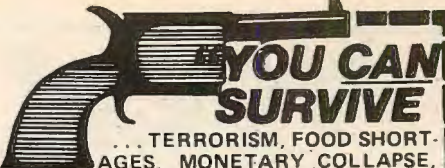
—Bob Poos



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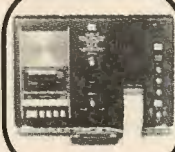
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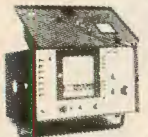
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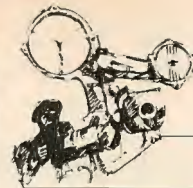
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FLAK

Continued from page 8

WAR IS NOT THE UGLIEST THING ...

Sirs:

I have been reading your magazine for the past three years and feel that you are doing a real service to the Vietnam veterans who had the balls to serve in an unpopular war. I would like to thank Bob Larson for the last paragraph of "The Judas Tree" (SOF, July, '81). If more people had the testicality to voice their support of the "flag-wavers," then there would have been a lot fewer folks shagging it north when the country asked them to pick up arms and defend their birthrights.

I would like to suggest that the DOD print this paragraph on a Rogers Rangers-type card for distribution to all combat veterans and active-duty service personnel. It is a hell of a motto for those who feel that taking up arms as patriots is as normal and necessary as breathing.

Thanks again,
Ted T. Buchanan
Lamar, Colorado

281st AND DELTA ...

Sirs:

Jim Morris' article, "Death-Dealing Project Delta" (SOF, July, August, September '81), mentioned the 281st Assault Helicopter Company in Vietnam. I am presently a crew chief in the 281st Aviation Co. (Combat Support) at Scott Air Force Base, Ill. Since the 281st returned from 'Nam, it has been deactivated to reserve status. If any of you have further information concerning 281st history, we would be extremely grateful. Also, if there are any former members of the 281st Assault Helicopter Company out there, please contact me at the below address.

Sincerely,
Ida Kuklinski
12263-13 Corrida Ct.
Maryland Heights, MO 63043

UADR: PRO ...

Sirs:

I really enjoyed your article on the Ulster Defense Regiment (see "On Northern Ireland's Front Line," SOF, August '81). I hope you will have more articles on the security forces in Northern Ireland and on the Royal

Ulster Constabulary. As a police officer, I am interested in how they are coping with terrorism in their country. I believe that we U.S. peace officers should be learning all we can about terrorist techniques to prepare us for the possibility — or more likely the reality — of terrorist groups operating in the United States.

Sincerely,
B.K. Lindback
Wyoming, Minnesota

UDR:
CON ...

Sirs:

Your recent article on Northern Ireland, which glorifies a sectarian unit, the Ulster Defense Regiment, is a direct insult to every Irish Catholic. It is highly offensive and upsetting. I'm 15, a regular reader of SOF and proud of being Irish Catholic. I feel that England has no right to have any occupational troops, UDR or others, on Irish soil. I'm outraged at the deaths of the hunger strikers. If Mrs. Thatcher makes peaceful change impossible, she will make violent change inevitable.

Yours truly,
Raymond Doody
Yorktown Heights, New York

HATE MAIL
ANONYMOUS ...

Sirs:

I must say frome hereing that *Soldier of Fortune* turning down the *Southern National Newsletter* ad was in very poor taste. As a reader of your magazine here in Philadelphia with a few of my friends buying it. I will pass it on that you also are run by the commie Jews to tell what is to go into your magazine. Here is what the Reds and niggers love to here that your magazine has turned down a group who stands for the white people in America first.

A Proud American
From Philadelphia

It is standard SOF policy to edit mail for spelling, grammar and clarity. It is also our usual policy not to print any letters which do not include names or return addresses (although we will withhold names or print only initials on request — and we only print complete addresses when a writer wishes other readers to get in touch with him). The above letter is printed exactly as we received it. We stand by our policy of not supporting any hate group that seeks to impose its will through force or threats — irrespective of race, color or creed. — The Eds.




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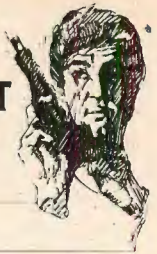
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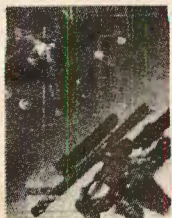
Continued from page 10



Ken Hackathorn



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courses of fire have had less in common with actual defensive pistol shooting. Just because last year's host club created an absurd course, that doesn't justify doing the same thing on a grander scale. Course designers must realize that we have to get back to practical application or many shooters are going to stay home from National matches.

The 1981 classic assault-style events illustrated this problem. Although they were great fun, they were heavily weighted against the revolver shooter. Only one brave wheelgunner tried to compete this year. I also question the use, in several events, of "Pepper Poppers." Named after their designer, John Pepper of Maryland, these knock-down steel targets are ideal for the up-and-coming social-shotgun matches which require the use of buckshot. However, they are not official IPSC targets, and they should not have been used in events at this year's Nationals. Furthermore, a contestant was disqualified for any accidental discharge or for dropping the slide on his autoloader while reloading between firing positions. The course designer failed here, and disqualification was a questionable way to correct a poorly set-up course of fire.

The Lafayette Gun Club's attempt to make the match more spectator-oriented proved less than successful. Major shooting events should be designed for the benefit of the shooters, not the spectators. Although some people believe we must make the IPSC a spectator sport in order for handgun shooting to be accepted by the non-gun-owning public, I fear this idea will never work, because the shooting disciplines are simply not like golf or tennis. If reaction targets made interesting viewing, then trap and skeet would be on "The Wide World of Sports." Furthermore, the current anti-gun bias of the mass media would make changing IPSC shooting for the benefit of the TV camera pointless.

The Lafayette Gun Club should be congratulated for its fine administration of its premiere shooting event but, in September 1982, the host club in Illinois should remember the basics and select a series of courses of fire that reflect defensive pistol techniques. Carnival events are fine for local clubs, but at the national and international level, it is time to remember and return to what we are really trying to accomplish.



EL SALVADOR

Continued from page 56

helicopters into and out of battles. I thought I was done with fighting and killing and suffering. But I guess that is not to be.

And I thought that up until now, in my two years of working for SOF, I had been looking for a real shooting war with little success. I hadn't really found it in the Caprivi Strip of South West Africa, nor in Rhodesia, nor in covering the western front on Korea's DMZ.

But I sure as hell found it in El Salvador. And I was very happy to be alive and unhurt. Thanks, Alpha Co., First Battalion, Fifth Brigade, for your indomitable courage. Otherwise, I wouldn't be sitting here in an air-conditioned office writing this story.



EL SALVADOR

El Salvador is the smallest (21,000 square kilometers) and most densely populated country (218 people per square kilometer) in Central America. Total population is 4.67 million and the annual population growth rate is three percent.

With an average per-capita income of \$650, it is also one of the poorest countries in Central America, which is largely why communist strategy conceived in Moscow and implemented by Havana and Managua targeted it as the next domino in Central America. If communist strategy succeeds in El Salvador, neighboring Honduras and then Guatemala will soon follow.

El Salvador's domestic gross product (GDP) is about \$3,400 million, with agriculture accounting for 30 percent of that and industry 19 percent.

Main agricultural products are coffee, cotton, sugarcane, corn, beans and livestock. The major industries are textiles, cement, tobacco, beer and chemicals.

The economically active population (EAP) is about 1.4 million, and up to 1980 it had an acceptable five-percent average annual increase. However, this trend reversed in 1980 with a 1.2 percent decline in GDP. If this situation continues, and the war exacerbates it, a decline of two to four percent may be expected.

About half of the EAP is employed in agriculture (small farms mostly), 10 percent in industry and five percent in construction.

Unemployment this year may reach as high as 30 percent.

There is universal military training, with draftees serving 2½ years. No exemptions are given and most of the men wind up in the infantry — and

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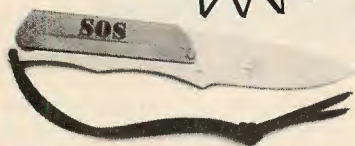
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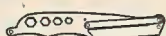
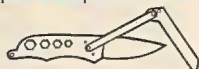


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ultimately in combat.

The bulk of El Salvador's exports are agricultural. Imported goods include industrial machinery and equipment, transportation equipment, chemicals, medicines and industrial tools. Exports in 1980 hit \$1.2 billion and imports were about \$1.3 billion.

Main trading partners are the United States, Western Europe, Korea, Taiwan, Japan and the Central American Common Market.

After a bloodless coup which toppled unpopular President Carlos Humberto Romero Mena, the progressive-minded military officers and civilians, who now compose the ruling *junta* under President Jose Napoleon Duarte, established an ambitious agrarian and economic program. This included seizing huge estates owned for many decades by El Salvador's "14 Families" and distributing the land in parcels to the *campesino* peasants. Most of the 14 families now dwell in Miami.

Other reforms included nationalization of the banking and foreign-trade sectors, a series of public works and social- and employment-maintenance programs.

The people of El Salvador are sturdy — they reminded me a lot of Vietnam's Montagnards — of Mestizo, or mixed Indian and European (89 percent), Indian (10 percent) and Caucasian (one percent) extraction.

There are no significant ethnic minorities other than the Caucasians.

The official language is Spanish. Education is compulsory for 10 years but, with many people living in rural areas where no schools exist, the attendance rate is no more than 65 percent. Literacy is about 50 percent in the urban areas and 30 percent in the countryside.

Infant-mortality rate is 60/1,000 as compared to the U.S. 13.8/1,000. Life expectancy is 56.7 for men and 59.7 for women.

El Salvador's climate is semi-tropical with distinct rainy and dry seasons (the weather was like that of central California during the rainy season, with heavy rains falling only after dark). The terrain consists of mountains that divide the country into three distinct regions: southern coastal belt, central valleys and plateaus, and northern mountains. Viewed from a Huey, the ground below looks much like Vietnam without rice paddies.

Prior to the Spanish conquest, the area which is now El Salvador was composed of two large Indian states of which the indigenous inhabitants were the Pipils, a nomadic tribe similar to their Aztec cousins. They were among the first Indian groups which abolished human sacrifice.

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Spain's first attempt to conquer the area failed in 1524 when Pedro de Alvarado was forced to retreat by Pipil forces. But in 1525 he returned and succeeded in bringing the country under control of the Captaincy General of Guatemala, where it remained until 1821.

An interesting facet of El Salvador's history is that in 1823, fearing subjugation by Mexico, El Salvador applied for United States statehood, but the United States never acted on the request. A Mexican revolution that year ousted the dictator Iturbide and a new Mexican congress granted independence to the Central American provinces as the Federal Republic of Central America. In 1828, El Salvador declared itself an independent republic.

El Salvador, like other countries in Latin America, has been through a number of revolutions, but relative stability was achieved from 1900 to 1930 and again after 1950.

In July 1969, El Salvador and neighboring Honduras fought a brief but bloody war because of differences about the border and because of a series of soccer games that caused high emotions in both countries.

El Salvador won the war, penetrating as far as 29 kilometers into Honduras. After five days, the Organization of American States (OAS) achieved a cease-fire and effected

subsequent Salvadoran withdrawal. A peace treaty signed in 1980, establish a "pacification zone," sort of a DMZ along the border.

On 15 October 1979, young, progressive military officers toppled Romero and established a five-man military/civilian *junta*.

In March 1980, the *junta* initiated sweeping reforms, including confiscation of all farms of more than 1,250 acres and distribution of the land to peasant cooperatives or former sharecroppers.

The government has formed an elections commission, and elections for a constituent assembly will be held in 1982. A presidential election is planned for 1983.

The present communist uprising had been brewing for some time, and two groups — the Unified Revolutionary Directorate (DRU) and the Democratic Revolutionary Front (FDR) — officially announced in May of 1980 that they planned to establish a Marxist totalitarian government in El Salvador.

They and some other communists and leftists are now under the umbrella movement of the *Frente Martin de Liberacion Nacional* (FMLN).

It is common knowledge that Cuban dictator Fidel Castro is behind the uprising and, since the revolution that ousted Nicaraguan dictator Anastasio Somoza, the latter country

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has also been equipping and training Salvadoran insurgents.

However, this war is — unlike in Nicaragua — no popular uprising, since by far the majority of the people stand solidly behind the government. Were it not for Cuban and Nicaraguan aid, the war would soon end.

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) helped shore up the war-shattered Salvadoran economy in fiscal year 1981 with \$63 million in aid, and plans further substantial assistance next year.

The United States has extended some — but thus far very little — military assistance to the country. It includes the 10 Huey helicopters of El Salvador's air force.

There are 60-some U.S. Army and Navy advisers currently serving in El Salvador. They pull short tours of three or four months. Many are Special Forces veterans of Vietnam.

—B.P.

**EL SALVADOR
PRESS CORPS**

The El Salvadoran press corps is startlingly like that which "covered" the war in Vietnam: Most of them sit around the Camino Real (in Saigor it

was the Caravel) Hotel bar drinking and talking about the war and writing their stories from their imaginations. But a hard-core few go out to the war, cover it honestly and take great risks.

Those whom I met that went and did, who honestly assessed the war and its causes and held a realistic attitude about it were: John Newhagen, UPI bureau chief; John Hoagland, a freelancer for *Newsweek* and UPI; and a woman freelance photographer named Viviana Mena, a native Argentine who takes too many risks and is probably going to get hurt someday. There was also an Argentine freelance television cameraman whose name escapes me now.

Hoagland accompanied me when Alpha Co., First Bn., Fifth Brigade, fought its battle at Amitlan Abajo (see accompanying story) and the TV cameraman was with the relief force which tried unsuccessfully to relieve us when we were surrounded.

Most of the other "journalists" were rather amusing. One four-man team from a French TV network sat around a table at the Camino Real bar, waving hands, talking loudly and drinking enormous amounts of red wine. Ditto for a British TV crew, which differed in that it drank beer.

Ann Nelson, *New York Times* stringer, works hard at covering the political scene, but she is well-aware that she has no business out in the fighting and wisely stays away from it.

Most U.S. newspapers which print anything at all about El Salvador follow the leftist line. Hoagland's and Newagen's honest reports have difficulty getting into print.

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—B.P.

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Continued from page 47

meters with helmet, webbing, pack and rifle. It nearly killed me. My misery was not mitigated by any sympathy from the instructors, who saw my weakness as a challenge to be met with oaths and kicks. The pace never let up, and for a while I thought I was in hell. For a long time my main exercise had consisted of lifting a beer bottle. Cigarettes, alcohol and women had taken their toll. I had to become an athlete overnight. It was the hardest thing I ever had to do in my life.

At RLI, we got up at 0330 and polished the barrack rooms until even the ceilings were immaculate. Then it was off for a run and the hated "pokie drill," in which one balanced a rifle at all sorts of improbable angles to strengthen the arm muscles. Back to the barracks for a quick shower, and fall in for breakfast. We would double-time to the mess hall and double-time back, rarely with enough time for more than a piece of toast and a cup of some evil-tasting liquid that was euphemistically called coffee. The same noxious stuff served as tea in the afternoon. Next, barrack-room inspection, when stern-faced corporals ruthlessly punished the slightest infraction. Then came four hours of drill in the hot, African sun, then physical training, weapons training and, finally, lunch. Often we were too exhausted even to eat, and collapsed in heaps on the floor of the barracks, careful not to disturb our kit layouts on the beds.

The afternoons brought more of the same, with classroom lectures following physical training. Staying awake in a crowded, hot, stuffy classroom was nearly impossible, but the corporals assisted us by bashing people across the head and shoulders with sticks and rifle butts.

After choking down the rice and cabbage that passed for dinner, we cleaned the whole training wing until it glistened; floors, doorknobs, light fixtures, offices, pathways, classrooms, everything. Then the corporals provided our evening's entertainment: shine- and change-parades.

Shine parades meant polishing the barracks until the Iron Duke himself would have been impressed, then submitting to verbal and physical abuse as the corporals ridiculed us and threw our kits around in a rage, usually allowing us 10 minutes to put the whole thing back together.

The change parades were a barrel of laughs, too. During these exercises, the army taught us the difference between drill order, p.t. order, battle order, etc.

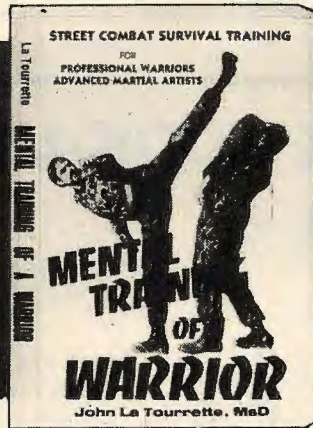
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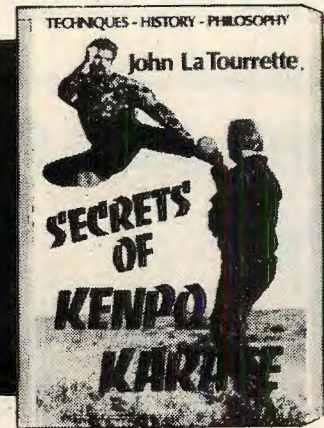


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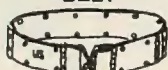
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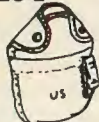
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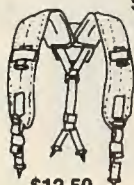


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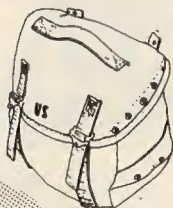


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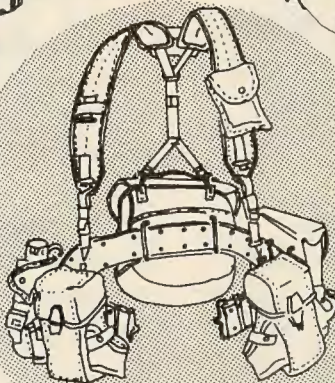


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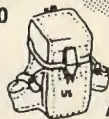


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One night, after seven times around the circle in full NATO combat order, I fell out. Little Mario, veteran of the French and Spanish Foreign Legions, carried me on his shoulder for the final kilometer. I woke up in the shower, covered with vomit and mucus. Looking up, I saw Sgt. Trevor Hodgson, my chief instructor. He was smiling — a rare occurrence usually prompted by the sight of blood. I struggled to my feet in a rough approximation of attention. He said, "Well done. You lead the squad tomorrow." He turned on his heel, leaving me to the ministrations of my friends.

I feared that man more than I feared God or the devil. Sgt. Hodgson was a legend in the RLI. He wore the coveted Bronze Cross for Valor. Not only had he personally killed more terrors than any other man in the army, but he had suffered serious wounds saving a wounded comrade. He was obviously not a man to be trifled with. On his last two times on duty with Training Troops, he had been kicked out for brutality to recruits. I made his acquaintance early in my training. We were standing in formation on the

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drill square when the loudest voice in the world shrieked, "Who is that four-eyed punk in the center rank?"

My heart sank down into my boots. He was behind me and I made a fatal mistake. I yelled, "Recruit Peirce, 729930, Corporal!"

"Corporal? I am a sergeant! If you ever dare to address me incorrectly again I'll kill you immediately! Do you understand me?"

"Yes, Sergeant!" I screamed, nearly collapsing in a paroxysm of fear. I owe Sgt. Hodgson more than I can ever repay. He taught me pride and discipline; he made me more than I had been before.

Several times when I was ready to fall out on road runs, he grabbed me by the shirt and literally pushed me onward. Ruthless as he was, he was always the first man to rush to help an injured recruit. He demanded maximum effort and he got it. Despite the punishment we took, we developed a tremendous *esprit de corps*. Once a new arrival shamed us in front of a corporal. He claimed to be a former British paratrooper, but when he was not complaining he bullied the younger recruits. Finally he went too far by insulting a corporal in front of our whole barrack room. This was too much. The 10 men in our barrack room had a special rule. Despite the fact that we hated the corporals and their discipline, we had decided to rise above it by being the toughest guys in the whole training troop, inflicting punishment on ourselves for infractions the corporals missed. Politely we asked the corporal to leave the room. Then we threw a blanket over the so-called tough guy and meted out a brutal punishment to the man who had let the squad down. The corporal returned with three other NCOs and they took our British friend away to the box for assaulting the squad.

"That bastard was nothing but filthy foreign scum! A disgrace to the Rhodesian army. What are we?"

Considering that we had seven nationalities in our barrack room, and that the corporal himself was a Zambian, our response might seem ludicrous: "We're Rhodesians, Corporal!" But that was the army. Morale returned and we went back to the endless task of spit-shining the barrack-room floor with renewed vigor.

Our squad worked harder than anybody else, existing on three hours' sleep a night. Sleep was precious. I learned to sleep while marching; in fact I actually learned to sleep while running! Once, another American cheated me out of an hour's sleep when he chose to hide instead of relieving me from a guard detail. Next morning, I knocked him over three



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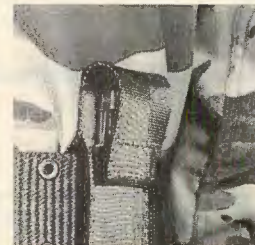
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bunks and had to be restrained from beating him further.

As a former musician, I had to compose marching songs for our squad. I came up with several, but we sang the favorite to the tune of "Warm California Sun." One line in particular seemed to please Sgt. Hodgson. "Our NCOs are strong and mean. The nastiest bastards I've ever seen. It's all right! 'Cause they're out there havin' fun, in that warm Rhodesian sun."

After six weeks of intensive training we enjoyed a four-hour visit with family and friends, known in army slang as "pets parade." As we marched to the reception center, the sergeant demanded that we sing. The spectacle shocked the civilians: 40 recruits singing at the top of their lungs, "Civilization means nothing to me. I dig killing people with an MAG. Its all right..." The Rhodesian conscripts relaxed for a few hours in the bosoms of their families; the foreigners made for the pub and got blind drunk while the instructors looked the other way.

Our only other chance to drink legally came when the RLI celebrated regimental day. Naturally, many of us exceeded the official limit of two beers and, of course, we started trouble. We were "blue squad" and proud of it. As we sat on the lawn drinking our beer, "green squad" annoyed us by making loud comments about their supposed superiority. We found a garden hose and proceeded to drench the whole squad; then we tore into them with our fists. The sergeant in charge of "green squad" protested volubly, but Sgt. Hodgson told him politely to shut his mouth and mind his own business.

Our tactical training was a surprise. I had heard so many stories about the Rhodesian army being the "finest counter-insurgency force in the world" that I had expected some real innovations. Imagine my amazement when we purloined some instructional material and found it was all marked U.S. Army, Fort Benning.

The best friend I made at RLI was a demented Irishman named Tony. In his barrack room, the senior recruit awakened the others by rudely throwing them out of their bunks. All but Tony. In his case it was a polite, "Tony, it's time to get up." When times got hard and we frustrated alcoholics were dying of thirst, he could always locate a quart of beer. He was a hard dude, but it's a hard world and he was my pal.

Tony was in "yellow squad." The guys in that squad longed to tear me up because of an incident in which I came up behind them, pretending to be a corporal, and chastised them for poor military bearing. To Tony, it was good fun, but one evening I entered

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his barrack room for a chat and the boys from "yellow squad" decided it was time for revenge. He stood up and said, "Rebel's a friend of mine. Do you guys understand what that means?"

Apparently they did. From then on I was persona grata with "yellow squad"!

The nickname "Rebel" arose from my RLI training. Having spent the greater part of my life in the South, I bristled when people addressed me as "Yank." Invariably, I replied, "That's Rebel to you." After a while the name stuck, and for the rest of my enlistment everyone called me Rebel.

Our first battle camp was a fiasco for me. We bivouacked near Lake McIlwaine. I was on roving guard. It was dark as a villain's heart and I got lost. While stumbling around in the dark, I blundered into my relief, an American named Dan Harrington. Like me, he had no idea where we were. We heard a rustling in the bush. Harrington suggested helpfully that it might be a wild boar. Unfortunately, he had underestimated the size of our antagonist. It was a rhinoceros! We each had one live magazine, but we couldn't risk firing since we had no idea where we were. The rhino charged through our battle camp like an outraged dinosaur, crushing several rifle pits.


Eventually we found our people, and I challenged a figure moving in the dark: "Halt! Identify yourself."

The corporal told me brusquely, "Shut up, Peirce. Save that Audie Murphy shit for the movies." Chastened, I returned to my foxhole.

A week before my return to Armored Cars, I ripped a muscle in my chest on the assault course. At the hospital, they injected me with a variety of drugs. Next morning, the training officer told me that I had the option of going to a non-combat outfit such as motor transport. Indignantly, I refused and, girding my loins (as they say in the Bible), I went to Sgt. Hodgson and demanded a combat assignment.

He listened with a weary smile. I told him in no uncertain terms that I had come to Rhodesia to fight and, if a minor injury could stop me, I would surely take the gap at the first chance. With the patience of long experience, he said, "Shut up. You'll be returning to your regiment tomorrow and you'll be taking the course on armored vehicles. You've got your combat assignment; now get out of my office — and good luck."

(To be continued)


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

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Continued from page 41

away to write about, the better story for all of us."

"We'll see what we can do," Sam said wearily.

A moment later Rick came back. "That was it," he said. "They expect a heavy attack on Sodeco, and they don't want you caught in it."

When working entirely at the sufferance of somebody else's army it is best not to throw a tantrum. "I'm not the reporter from *Women's Wear Daily*," I muttered. "Next time gimme an AK and let me stay."

They both grinned. "We buy our own," Rick said. "I doubt anybody is going to want to give you his, and do without."

Rick and Sam went out on the balcony. I followed them. We sat down in wicker chairs and propped our feet up on the railing. Christine came out and joined us. She leaned easily against the balcony and threw her long hair back to let the breeze air her neck.

"You buy your own guns, your own ammo, your own uniforms, and there's no rank in your army?"

"That's right," Sam said.

"I don't see how you can fight a war that way."

Rick grinned. "We can do it because our fighters are very good."

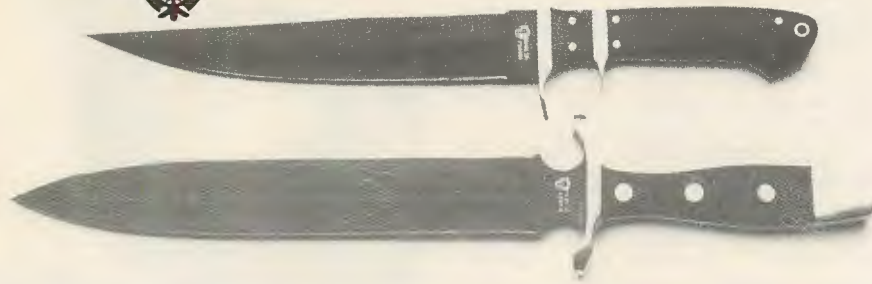
"What happens if you want to leave?"

Rick shrugged. "I've been working straight through for a month, being with the reporters during the day, and doing some other little things at night. Next week I'm going to take a couple of days off and go to the beach."

I shook my head. "How do you know who's in charge?"

"Well, we don't have rank, but we have job titles. When the war is hot, everybody takes orders. When it's not, we talk it over. When it dies down for a while, we go back to our regular jobs."

"Rick," I asked, "why don't you wear a uniform?"



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He grinned his old grin. "Our G-5 asks me the same question all the time," he said. "I don't like them. Besides, you see those boots?" He nodded toward Sam's combat boots. "Those are boondockers." He wiggled his sneakers at me. "These are better for city fighting. I have a friend who fights in flip-flops. He's not any good in boots." He shrugged.

What are they going to do? They can't bust him; he has no rank. They can't fine him; he doesn't get paid. They can't fire him; he's too valuable.

After a while Rick said, "Look, we've got to leave. You're welcome to crash here tonight. Anything you like in the fridge is yours."

I sat on the balcony for a long time, watching the sun go down and the streets clear.

Some of the guys from the G-5 section sat inside, sipping beer or coffee, and watching a *Charlie's Angels* segment on a 24-inch color TV, with subtitles in French and Arabic. Completely oblivious to the automatic-weapons fire in the street outside, they stared fascinated as those three adorable kumquats battled imaginary bad guys with .32-caliber automatics.

I heard no indirect fire, but lots of AK and M16 bursts from a few blocks west, toward Sodeco.

(To be continued.)

LEBANON'S WAR: THE CHRISTIAN VIEW

Lebanon is the smallest nation in the Middle East, and one of the oldest. The original Lebanese were the Phoenicians who invented, among other things, writing and the boat. Lebanon is a fertile strip of land about a 150 miles long and 50 wide, with two mountain ranges paralleling the sea. These ranges catch the rain coming in from the Med and make the Bekaa Valley, between them, a veritable garden spot of fruit, vegetable and hashish cultivation. Lebanese Forces, by the way, were dead set against drugs of any kind, wanting their people on their toes and ready to roll at all times.

There are approximately 3 million Lebanese, of whom roughly 1.8 million are Christians (most are Maronite Catholics who, like the Greek Orthodox, are affiliated with Rome, but whose priests can marry; the rest are regular Roman Catholics). The balance of the Lebanese are Moslem.

Historically, Lebanon was freed from 400 years of Ottoman occupation by the Turkish defeat in WWI. From 1918 until 1948, Lebanon was administered by the French.

Under the system of government installed by the French, the president is always Christian, and the premier Moslem; each has veto power over the other. This same system prevails throughout the political

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hierarchy. This system was designed to keep one faction from having power over the other, but it also prevents the government from taking rapid, decisive action. People who wish to do so must take action on their own.

Even as the French were leaving Lebanon in 1948, the Israelis were creating their own nation and, in the process, creating large numbers of homeless, angry people. The UN agencies assigned to help these refugees prevailed on the Lebanese government to accept over 175,000 of them. By 1970, against the will of the Lebanese, this number had grown to 600,000.

In the United States we've had our own recent difficulties with refugees, but we've accepted nowhere near that number, and we are a nation of more than 200 million people. Proportionately, it would be as though we had an influx of 50 million Cubans. Originally this resettlement was sold as a temporary measure. Because it was anticipated that a homeland would be found for the Palestinians, they were allowed to stay together in camps, as both they and the Lebanese wanted (this influx had the potential not only to disrupt Lebanon's economy but also shift the delicate religious balance, since there were now more Moslems than Christians; the Christians, though generous, hospitable people, did not want to become a minority).

As the years passed and it became obvious that the Palestinians weren't going anywhere for quite a while, they turned

their finely honed subversive talents to the situation at hand and worked to polarize the Moslem community against the Christians. (There is, in fact, a Lebanese Moslem militia. Lebanese Forces call them "The Space Invaders" because their sole martial skill lies in video games.) This foreign disruption of Lebanon's religious balance is what the press refers to as the "civil war" in Lebanon.

Fortunately, the Christian Lebanese did not have to depend on the weak, divided Lebanese army for protection. In 1936, a farsighted man named Pierre Gemayel realized that his people weren't getting much protection from the French. He formed the Kataebe Party to provide an organizational base for a militia to defend the Christian areas in which his family was influential. The party functioned rather like the Little River Protective Association in Norman, Okla., an organization of lake residents who live too far away to get much help from the city police, and which patrols the area for its members. (There is also an analogy between the Kataebe and the Little League, but when these kids get old enough, instead of forming a baseball team, they form a light-weapons infantry squad.) The Kataebe movement caught on, and soon all the Christian areas had similar party organizations and militias.

The translation of the Lebanese word *Kataebe* is roughly the same as *phalange*: a military organization. That is the origin of the term "Christian Phalangist Militia" that you read in the papers. The

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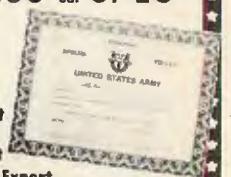
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parties trained only soldiers, not commanders. They were neighborhood- and village-defense oriented, and had only the most limited kind of offensive capability. Thus they were caught flatfooted by the large influx of new Palestinians from Jordan in 1970, after what was described to me as "Hussein's massacre of the Palestinians."

Further, the new Palestinians were in no mood to be nice, and the old ones had grown stronger. There were four refugee camps: Tall Zaatar, Jisr el Bacha, Ararantina and Dhaye, in a semicircle around Beirut, with the sea on the fourth side. In 1973, the Palestinians decided to link up, close the roads and take the city. To that end they set up road blocks, stopped traffic and started jerking people out of their cars and checking IDs. Most of the Christians they killed outright. The others they killed slowly. We're talking about regular five o'clock commuter traffic. It would be like the Chicanos setting up roadblocks between Boulder and Denver and skinning alive any Anglos who passed their way.

The Lebanese "civil war" was on.

To its credit, the Lebanese army — which is small, and divided along religious lines, but is still a pretty decent army — beat the hell out of the Palestinians. At one point they were within two hours of destroying them as a military force.

Unfortunately, at the time, the president of Lebanon was Suleiman Franjeh, a Christian, but a mortal enemy of the Kataebe, and a friend of Syria, where he still has business ties. Syrian diplomats were in his office when the commander of the Lebanese army called to announce his imminent victory. Franjeh ordered him to halt the attack.

The commander pleaded for one hour more. Franjeh denied the request. Instead of claiming communication failure and shooting his telephone, the commander did what he was told.

The Palestinians survived and grew fat on Saudi and Libyan money, given them to fight the Israelis. Now survival was up to the "Christian Phalangist Militia."

Although highly motivated and able to draw men, and frequently women, from all portions of society, the Phalangists were not well-organized to fight offensively.

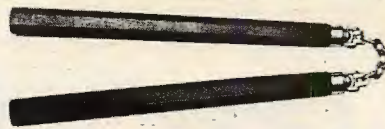
That began to change in 1976 at the battle of Tall Zaatar. It was obvious to all that it had to be taken, although no authority was imposed from above; there was no Christian Napoleon at Tall Zaatar, the largest and most heavily fortified of the Palestinian camps. The neighborhood rifle squads got together to take it in a manner that is more reminiscent of a large street rumble than an attack by a recognized army. The Israeli high command estimated that it would take the Christians six months to take Tall Zaatar, if at all. They did it in 57 days, with a 28-day stand-down in the middle, while a truce that broke down was negotiated.

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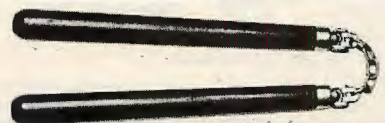
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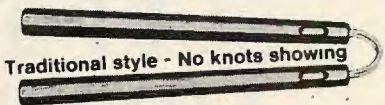


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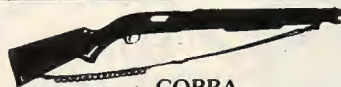
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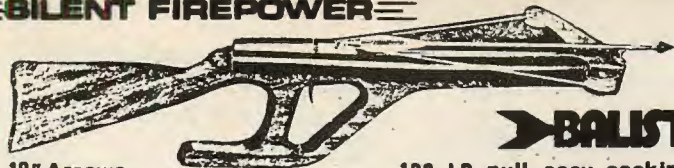
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idea of Lebanese Forces emerged from this victory. Pierre Gemayel's son Bechir is credited with the idea of unifying the various party militias; he is their present commander. Bechir may be the boss's son, but he commands by virtue of a formidable intellect, dedication and charisma. (Lebanon is a country of old, old families and old, old money. Nobody but the boss's son could have done it.)

But my feeling about Lebanese Forces is that there is no way to go back to doing things the old way. The young people I talked to were for Lebanon, not party. Although the main force is about 10,000 men, Lebanese Forces can field up to 30,000 if they have to. Seven thousand of them are Kataebe. The party has retained 3,000 more for security of their home areas.

The Lebanese Forces movement did not come easily. Tall Zaatar started it, but the leaders of the various parties had the power of feudal warlords, not an easy thing to surrender. Things were going well against the Palestinians, however. The Lebanese Moslems were barely a factor. Why mess with a winning combination, right?

Then in 1978, under a mandate from the Arab League, Syria entered Lebanon as an "Arab Deterrent Force" to keep the peace. Strange as it seems now, at first the Lebanese Christians welcomed the Syrians. Anything to stop this awful war, right?

This turned out to be a deck made entirely of jokers. Lebanon is a small, rich, fertile country, surrounded by deserts cut up into large, poor, backward, jealous countries. Syria, a military dictatorship under Hafaz Assad, the president, and his two brothers, one of whom commands the reserves and the other of whom commands the Syrian Special Forces, has never recognized the existence of nor had diplomatic relations with Lebanon, but considers it a part of "Greater Syria" — and the best part at that. In addition, the "Arab Deterrent Force" was 100-percent Moslem, and its soldiers were unsophisticated and quick to take offense. (More accurately, they are an army of bloodthirsty savages with Russian weapons.)

One of the Lebanese Forces told me of an incident which happened to a cousin of his, a doctor. This man was stopped at a Syrian checkpoint and told to open his trunk. Having a new, modern car, he released the trunk with a control under the dash. The Syrians became highly incensed that he hadn't gotten out of the car to open the trunk, and although he explained that it wouldn't open that way, they beat him to death.

While I was in Lebanon, a family going by car into the Christian town of Zahle, then under siege, was stopped, and when they declined to give two young Syrians a hitch down to the next checkpoint, because the car was full, the Syrians opened up with AKs, killing the whole family.

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papers while I was there, but didn't get particularly big play. None of the people who read it when I did seemed particularly surprised, or more angry than they already were. If prompted, they all had stories of their own which competed with that one.

Enthusiasm for the "Arab Deterrent Force" faded quickly.

Indeed, it faded so quickly and decisively that Lebanese Forces threw the Syrians out of the Christian areas. Unhappy at having their peace-keeping efforts thus rejected, the Syrians responded with heavy, indiscriminate rocket and artillery bombardment of the Christian areas, and a series of poorly planned, uncoordinated, futile ground attacks, which Lebanese Forces beat back handily.

At the present time, the so-called "green line" separates the Christian areas in East Beirut from Moslem West Beirut. Ideally I would have liked to go across the line to do some "objective journalism." But without a visa I would be subject to arrest, interrogation, and, uh . . . dismemberment. So I didn't do that.

But my colleagues of the press, who make their headquarters at the Commodore Hotel in West Beirut (with its famous circular bar) report that city services are disrupted, large areas of West Beirut are without lights and water, and garbage is piled high in the streets. Crime is rampant. Cars disappear off the streets to reappear magically in Damascus, the capital of Syria. Rapes, murders and indiscriminate street crime are common.

In East Beirut no one bothers to lock his car, and anyone, man or woman, can walk the streets at any hour of the day or night without fear of anything but rockets from the other side. The water is hot and the toilets flush.

When I asked what relations were like between Lebanese Forces and the U.S. government, I was told there were none and that the American embassy was guarded by Palestinians.

Rick told me one night: "We have no allies, no hope and no choice. All we can do is fight until we're all gone. Nobody needs us. There is no oil here in Lebanon. Our enemies have all the money in the world, and 50 times more men than we do. The country will still be beautiful when we're gone. Kissinger, when he was in power, said, 'What are they, the Christian Lebanese, a million? We'll give the Palestinians Lebanon and resettle the Lebanese Christians in Canada or somewhere.' But we've been here 6,000 years and here we'll stay."

Almost all the time I knew Rick he was joking and smiling, but he wasn't kidding then. These guys don't see how they can win or quit.

— J.M.



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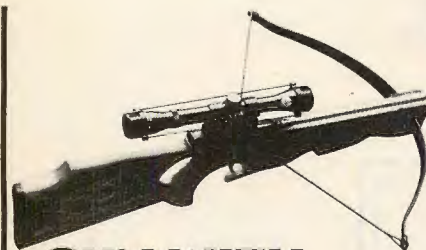
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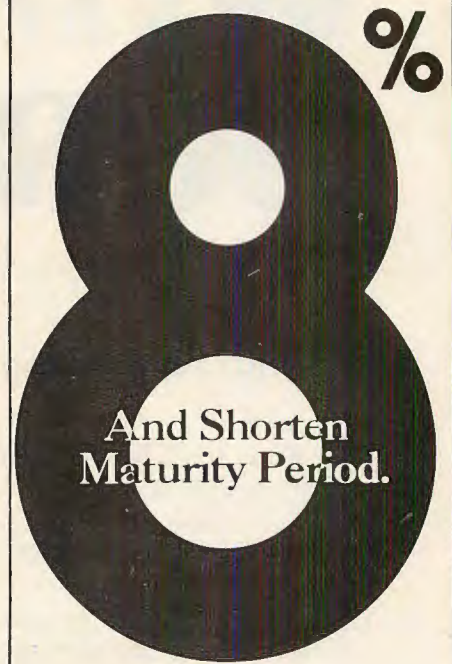
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